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## Palestinians mark Deir Yassin

AL BIREH (AFP) — Palestinians marked the 49th anniversary Wednesday of the massacre by a Jewish terrorist group of 254 Palestinians in Deir Yassin village near Jerusalem. "The goals of this massacre were the same as the goals of today's Israeli government — to uproot Palestinians from their land," said Faisal Hussein at a memorial ceremony. The Deir Yassin massacre was carried out by the Irgun movement led by Menachem Begin who became Israeli prime minister. The slaughter sparked a mass exodus of Arabs fearful of further killings. The Israeli settlement of Givat Shaul now covers the former village of Deir Yassin. A representative of the organization "Deir Yassin Remembered" that organized the service said it was trying to raise \$100,000 to establish a memorial so Israelis would also remember the massacre. "We want to build a monument on the same place of the massacre," said organization representative Daniel McGowan at the ceremony in the West Bank city of Al Bireh. "We want those who will visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum, when they look through the valley, to also see what happened at Deir Yassin."

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراي

## 'Eid Al Adha holidays announced

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries and public institutions will be closed starting Wednesday, April 16, and will reopen Monday, April 21, for 'Eid Al Adha holidays, according to a communique issued by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Wednesday. Public schools will close today and reopen April 21 for spring and 'Eid Al Adha holidays.

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## Palestinians not to back down in Washington talks

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestinian officials insisted Wednesday they would demand a total freeze on Israeli settlement building when they visit Washington this week for crisis talks on saving the Mideast peace process.

Brushing aside Israeli refusals to consider even a temporary suspension of Jewish construction in Palestinian areas, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat instructed his negotiators not to back down on the issue when they begin their mission in Washington on Thursday.

"Arafat has given orders that all settlement activity should stop and that Israel take no further unilateral decisions," said Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator who will accompany Mr. Arafat's top deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, to Washington.

Hassan Asfour, Mr. Erekat's deputy, said the delegation would also demand that an emerging U.S. plan that could involve accelerated negotiations on the final status of Palestinian areas oblige Israel to implement outstanding commitments under interim peace accords.

These notably require further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and authorization to open Palestinian air and sea ports.

"We want an American mechanism to implement what has been agreed upon," he said.

Palestinians have protested in the streets and waged

diplomatic warfare against Israel since it began building a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem last month despite its obligation under signed peace accords to negotiate over Palestinian claims to Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel also undermined faith in the negotiating process by unilaterally deciding to limit its next scheduled troop withdrawal from the West Bank to nine per cent of the territory, a third of what the Palestinians wanted.

The decisions convinced many Palestinians that Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu would never allow them their goal of an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital.

The result has been almost daily violent protests on the West Bank which have left five Palestinians killed by Israeli bullets and three suicide bombings against Israel which left three dead.

Tuesday saw the deadliest single day of fighting with three Palestinians shot and killed by soldiers and Israeli settlers in Hebron.

Eleven more Palestinians were wounded in clashes in the West Bank city on Wednesday, but hundreds of Palestinian police intervened to halt the unrest (see separate story).

A survey of Palestinian opinion released Wednesday showed broad popular support for taking a hard line with Israel, with 63 per cent of those queried back-

ing escalating street protests to force a change in Israeli policy.

U.S. President Bill Clinton invited the Palestinians to Washington after talks Monday with Mr. Netanyahu failed to secure a freeze on settlement building or other goodwill gestures that might help get negotiations back on track.

After those talks Mr. Netanyahu insisted that only an effective Palestinian crackdown on anti-Israeli violence can lead to a resumption of the peace process.

Mr. Netanyahu discussed the security situation Wednesday with Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who charged afterwards that the Palestinian leaders "still haven't intensified their efforts against terror and the sources of terror."

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Ilan also reaffirmed Wednesday that any freeze on settlement building was out of the question.

"We are only building in existing settlements, to assure the natural growth of these communities," he told AFP. "Telling us to freeze this is like telling people not to have children."

At the same time, Mr. Netanyahu has offered go-for-broke negotiations to resolve such big issues of the borders and status of the Palestinian entity and the future of refugees, settlements and Arab East Jerusalem in six to nine months, rather than the

(Continued on page 7)

## Clinton wants Netanyahu to prove intentions

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton wants Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to prove with deeds not words he is sincere in his proposal to speed up peace negotiations with the Palestinians, the New York Times said Wednesday.

Only by showing his sincerity can Mr. Clinton commit himself and American credibility to Mr. Netanyahu's idea for a six-month push for a final settlement with the Palestinians, U.S. officials told the daily.

"We don't want to invest ourselves in a process that six months down the road shows that it was bound to fail from the beginning," one official said.

Following the disappointing Clinton-Netanyahu meeting here Monday, senior U.S. officials said they made several "very strong suggestions" to the Israeli leader "to show Palestinians the benefits of peace and to prove the seriousness of his intentions."

The suggestions included rapid construction of Arab housing in East Jerusalem; a quiet Israeli agreement not to expand Jewish construction in occupied areas while peace talks are under way; and an Israeli offer to negotiate the size of the next Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank due in September, rather than deciding it unilateral-

ly. Mr. Netanyahu was also pressed to open the Gaza Airport and port facilities, to provide safe passage for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank and to allow more Palestinians to travel in and out of Israel to work.

And during a meeting here later this week with Palestinian officials, Mr. Clinton is expected to insist that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat show his commitment to fight terrorism.

U.S. officials told the daily that Mr. Netanyahu listened carefully to the U.S. message and has returned home to consider it.

Mr. Clinton said on Tuesday he believed there was "a fairly decent chance" of reviving peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

At a joint news conference with visiting Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Mr. Clinton gave no explanation for his optimism. "I would not conclude from the fact that I'm giving very noncommittal answers that we cannot get it (the Middle East peace process) going again. I think there's a fairly decent chance that we can," he told reporters.

(Continued on page 7)



Iraqi pilgrims sacrifice sheep as they prepare to board a plane near Baghdad on Wednesday. The plane carrying 104 pilgrims to Mecca flew to Saudi Arabia in defiance of U.N. sanctions barring international flights by Iraqi aircraft (Reuters photo)

## Iraq defies U.N. embargo with Hajj flight to Jeddah

Combined agency dispatches

AN IRAQI plane flying 104 old and sick Muslims in defiance of a United Nations air embargo on Baghdad landed on Wednesday at Jeddah airport in Saudi Arabia, airport sources said.

"The Iraqi plane, flight number 1161, landed at Jeddah airport at 12.15 p.m. local time," one source told Reuters by telephone from the Red Sea port city.

No other details were immediately available. Reporters in Baghdad had earlier on Wednesday seen a Soviet-built Ilyushin 76 take off from Rasheed airbase in the eastern outskirts of the Iraqi capital on its way to Jeddah.

The Saudi authorities, which were not notified of the flight in advance, sent two warplanes to escort the plane to Jeddah where it landed safely at around midday and allowed the pilgrims into the country.

Jordan said the plane had not received permission to enter its airspace and must have flown at low altitude to avoid its radars.

The flight was believed to be the first abroad by an Iraqi plane since the U.N. Security Council passed

Resolution 670 on Sept. 25, 1990 banning Iraqi aircraft from flying in and out of the country. An Iraqi Foreign Ministry official told the state-run Iraqi News Agency (INA) that the flight did not constitute a violation of the sanctions.

"Nothing in the U.N. resolutions prohibits such a flight, which was made to allow pilgrims to carry out their religious duties," he said.

There was no immediate official Saudi comment on the flight, the second pilgrim plane the kingdom has allowed to land this year in contravention of U.N. sanctions.

A Libyan plane carrying pilgrims landed in Jeddah on March 29. It was the third such flight since 1995 by Libya in defiance of U.N. sanctions connected with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over

Lockerbie, Scotland.

Saudi officials had said Riyadh did "what it had to do" by allowing the first Libyan pilgrim plane to land in 1995.

Diplomats in the kingdom say Saudi Arabia as custodian of Islam's two holiest shrines cannot be seen as denying any Muslim with a valid Hajj visa the right to perform the pilgrimage, which reaches a climax this year on April 16.

Up to two million Muslims, half of them from abroad, perform Hajj every year to the Holy City of Mecca.

The U.N. imposed sanctions on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which led Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states to cut relations with Baghdad.

The Iraqi pilgrims, all over 50-year-old, were

(Continued on page 7)

## Clashes rage in Hebron; protests in Gaza

Combined agency dispatches

NEW CLASHES broke out Wednesday following the funeral of a Palestinian killed by Israeli troops, and hospital officials said at least 30 people were injured by rubber-coated bullets.

Thousands of protesters marched behind the flag-shrouded body of Nader Issaid, 24, calling for revenge and suicide attacks against Israelis. Issaid was one of two Palestinians killed in protests Tuesday in Hebron that began after two Jewish seminary students shot and killed a Palestinian in the divided city.

Palestinian officials said Israel must disarm Jewish settlers before peace talks could resume.

"The olive branch is down and the Kalashnikov is raised," marchers shouted at Issaid's funeral. "Revenge, revenge," others yelled.

"The battle has started," said 24-year-old Yousef Dandif, raising his fist in the air.

Palestinian police fired 21 shots into the air as Issaid's body, wrapped in the red, white, green and black Palestinian flag, was lowered into the grave. Issaid died after several hours in a coma Tuesday with a bullet in the brain.

After the funeral, thousands of Palestinian marchers, many waving black and green flags with militant slogans, marched toward the Israeli-controlled part of the city, where 450 Jewish settlers live.

Israeli troops fired rubber-coated bullets to keep the crowd at bay, and protesters quickly began throwing rocks and fire-

bombs. At one point, Palestinians brought buckets and cartons filled with rocks to replenish the supply of protesters on the front line.

Palestinian police tried to calm the crowd, forming human chains and blocking the street with trucks to keep them away from the Israeli soldiers. Officers climbed on rooftops to stop youths from hurling down rocks.

A Palestinian gas station attendant suspected of collaborating with Israel was seriously wounded Wednesday by gunshots fired from a passing car. Police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said he was hit in the head by shots fired by an unidentified man who escaped.

Eleven Palestinians and an AFP photographer were wounded by rubber bullets fired by Israeli soldiers Wednesday.

The clashes spread briefly to the village of Dura outside Hebron, but ended by early afternoon. Although intense, the protest far have not moved to the rest of the West Bank, and Major General Uzi Dayan, head of the Israeli army's central command, praised Palestinian police for working with Israeli troops to control the violence.

Palestinian police commanders met Wednesday to discuss how to contain the violence, said Abdul Fatah Jaidi, head of Hebron's national guard.

Brigadier General Jaidi said Palestinian police had been ordered to be present in large numbers at all clashes, and to keep demonstrators away from Israeli soldiers.

"We warned the Israelis not to use live bullets and

(Continued on page 7)



Palestinian policemen carry an injured colleague who was shot by Israeli borderguards on Wednesday during fierce clashes in Hebron (AFP photo)

## Palestinians want more street protests against Israel — poll

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A large majority of Palestinians want to step up street protests against Israel's settlement policies despite a growing death toll from clashes between demonstrators and Israeli troops, according to a poll released Thursday.

The survey carried out April 3 and 4 by the Palestinian Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (jmcc) also found that 39.8 per cent of those queried support military operations against Israeli targets, versus 47.7 per cent who oppose them.

When asked specifically about suicide bombings like a March 21 attack by a militant in a Tel Aviv cafe which killed three Israeli women, 32.7 per cent supported such operations while 54.5 per cent were opposed.

Concerning violent street protests which have raged almost daily since Israel broke ground on March 18 on a new Jewish set-

tlement in Arab East Jerusalem, 62.7 per cent felt such demonstrations should be intensified, while 28.6 per cent disagreed.

While the jmcc poll found that 73 per cent of Palestinians still support the Oslo peace process — a phased and negotiated path towards self-determination — this was down from 78 per cent in a similar poll conducted on March 7.

A recent proposal by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resolve the crisis by replacing interim peace steps laid out in the Oslo accords with accelerated negotiations on a final peace settlement was rejected by 68 per cent of those asked. Only 11 per cent supported the idea.

In its summary of the results, the jmcc said the poll showed a marked drop in trust in the peace process, evidenced both in the fall in support for negotiations and a

(Continued on page 7)

## Crown Prince calls on youth to help in national reconstruction and stability

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday urged Jordanian youth to contribute to building a stable and secure country with their skills and potential and under the wise guidance of His Majesty King Hussein.

Addressing a rally held to mark the start of work on a youth cultural and sports club in Fuheis, the Regent said the work of youth paves the ground for Jordan to forge ahead with solid steps and self-confidence to attain further achievements towards progress.

Stressing that the human being constitutes the basic element for a secure and stable society, the Regent said that the youth should help enhance social contacts and offer meaningful contributions to the reconstruction of the nation.

The Fuheis Cultural Festival, the Regent said, event has created a healthy atmosphere for the work of youth.

"We are now laying the foundation stone for another and blessed effort that would help create the right atmosphere for Jordanians to live in affection, cooperation and stability," he said.

The Regent congratulated Fuheis residents on this important endeavour and thanked the Jordan Cement Factories Com-

pany (JCFC) for financing the first phase of the project.

He also expressed hope that the company will pursue efforts towards creating a clean and healthy atmosphere in Fuheis free of all pollution caused by the cement dust and chimney smoke.

Fuheis Mayor Anton Abu Dayyeh and the youth club's director, Yasser Akrouh, delivered speeches expressing the local community's appreciation of Prince Hassan's efforts in support of the activities of youth and sports clubs in the Kingdom.

At the end of the ceremony Prince Hassan unveiled a commemorative plaque and presented awards to organisations and individuals who have contributed to the project.

The total area of the club premises will be 2600 square metres, but the project will be carried out in two stages: the first is to be financed by the Jordan Cement Factories Company with a donation of JD90,000 and the second by the Ministry of Youth in 1997 when it will allocate JD100,000 for the project which will offer the local youth community with sports, cultural, scientific and social facilities.

After the Fuheis visit Prince Hassan called at the nearby Maheh Village



## Algerian elections are seen unlikely to stop bloodbath

PARIS (R) — More brutal killings including chainsaw butchery have underscored Algeria's chronic insecurity and June elections are unlikely to end the violence, political analysts in Algeria say.

The June 5 ballot to elect the country's first parliament in five years is seen by President Liamine Zeroual as a way out of five years of crisis, but one Algerian-based analyst said: "The situation is not going to be solved by one election."

In four days ending early this week, more than 120 people were reported to have been butchered in attacks by anti-government militants on isolated villages, Algerian newspapers said.

Some were cut up by chainsaws. Others had their throats slit.

The authorities have been silent.

But lack of reaction to the reports in a heavily controlled media is seen by many analysts as tacit confirmation.

Another political analyst said: "There are some places now that are as safe as Washington or London. But then you look at the mountains outside Algiers and it's a tough, ugly scene up there."

"But people killed in the mountains does not mean it will have an impact on the voting. And it is hard to say when it will end. The election will not necessarily end it all, especially as some of the killings seem to have moved away from a rationale of Islamic ideology,"

Radicalism has been well-

rooted in the Mitidja area where the latest killings occurred since the 1980s when Mustapha Bouyali tried to launch the country's first serious guerrilla war. He was killed by security forces in 1986.

Security analysts say at least some of the bloodshed seemed to result from guerrillas determined to punish some who, tired from the long conflict, had either given up or gone over to government forces.

The killers were butchering families to send a message to those who might be tempted by the authorities' offer of clemency.

Many of the killings are blamed on the Armed Islamic Group (gia) that sprang up after the outlawing of the Islamic Salvation Front (fis) — the Muslim party that had taken a big lead in a December 1991 general election.

The authorities scrapped the poll the next month and the country has been without an elected parliament since then.

Until the latest killings, there had been a lull in attacks on isolated villages which, along with car bombs in Algiers and near towns, scarred the holy month of Ramadan which ended early in February. More than 300 people were killed in that month. About 50,000 have been killed since early 1992.

Diplomatic sources and political analysts agree that the latest violence may not be linked directly to the elections, despite expectations that rebels might try to disrupt them.

"People from across the spectrum suggest it could be the gia going after rival groups," said one.

"Or it could be retaliation by the groups for villagers not giving them their support any more. There is not a lot of spare money or food for them to give."

Economic factors, rather than security, appear to dominate life in main urban centres too. Residents say shops are packed with goods, many imported, that have not been seen in Algiers for years. But they are too expensive for them to buy.

"There are constant complaints from ordinary people, and manifestations of discontent," said one analyst, referring to strikes by university lecturers and unrest in hospitals and on factory floors.

But the unrest was not showing itself in any support for the militants, as had been the case when discontented young people swung behind the fis, first in the 1991 general election and then in giving it support in street battles with security forces in much of 1992.

"In a practical way, the army being out on the streets for security reasons is probably helping keep the lid on," one commentator said.

Another said: "Many of the places in Algeria have calmed down, but it is an uneasy calm."

"A lot of Algerians fear the calm more than the storm because you know what they are doing during the storm, whereas during the calm they are plotting,"



FADING FAITH: A white dove with olive branches, symbolic of the Middle East peace process, is hung in defeat, at Al-Azhar University, on Wednesday in Gaza City by Palestinian students in protest against Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line policies (AFP photo)

## Kuwait frees 7 Bahrainis

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Seven Bahrainis among a group arrested here for illegally collecting donations and possessing literature against the Bahraini government have been released, press reports said Wednesday.

The Kuwaiti daily Al Watan quoted an Interior Ministry official as saying the seven Bahrainis were released on Tuesday from a total of 13 arrested two weeks ago.

"The investigation is underway with the other six who were detained and are being jailed until the end of the investigation in order to decide whether to deport them to Bahrain or present them for trial in Kuwait," the paper said.

The daily Al Rai Al Aam reported that six members of the Bahraini group were released on Monday, while a seventh was released on Tuesday. Kuwait's Ministry of Interior said last week that the security forces had arrested a group of non-Kuwaitis on March 26 for planning subversive activities, but gave few details.

Press reports here and the Bahraini opposition in London originally claimed 11 Bahrainis were being held after the security swoop.

The Ministry of Interior on Wednesday had no comment about the press reports.

Al Watan said the Bahrainis were arrested for illegally collecting donations and possessing leaflets insulting to the Bahraini government.

In parliament on Tuesday, Shiite Muslim Deputy Adnan Abdul Samad called on the government to guarantee the legal rights of the arrested Bahrainis, after he claimed that a Kuwaiti official had threatened to deport them.

## Erbakan says Turkey's ties with Israel depend on Israel's behaviour

ANKARA (R) — Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, a persistent critic of Israel, has linked improved ties with the Jewish state to its handling of the status of Jerusalem and its withdrawal from occupied lands.

Mr. Erbakan used a meeting with visiting Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy late Tuesday to demand an immediate halt to construction of Jewish settlements and a pull-back by Israeli forces from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"It is natural, as with all other countries, that developing our relations with Israel is part of our programme," he told reporters before meeting Mr. Levy.

"In this connection, Israel also has large responsibilities... Above all it must always recognise that Jerusalem is a sacred city for all peoples... For Muslims as well as for Christians and Jews," Mr. Erbakan said.

Israel must also halt the construction of new Jewish settlements in and around Jerusalem and withdraw from the occupied lands, in line with U.N. resolutions, he said.

Mr. Levy, however, struck a more optimistic note.

"Another step has been taken in relations between the two countries," he said. "I believe in the future these relations will develop further."

Their meeting, which lasted for 45 minutes, ended days of speculation over whether Mr. Erbakan — who campaigned against Turkish military ties to Israel — would receive Mr. Levy at all.

Mr. Erbakan finally agreed

## S. Arabia refuses to reveal data on blast

MECCA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has information on the anti-U.S. bombing in Khobar last year but refuses to divulge any details before the investigation is complete, its interior minister said Wednesday.

"Saudi security services were able to gather a lot of information on the Khobar crime in the first hours" after the June 25, 1996, attack against a U.S. air force dormitory that killed 19 American servicemen, Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz told reporters. "But we will not announce anything before the investigation is finished, it is in the interest of the investigation," he said.

"The kingdom accuses no one and clears no one," he said in response to U.S. news reports that Iran was behind the bombing.

He refused to provide any details on the arrest in Canada of Saudi national Hani Abdul Rahim Sayegh, who was said to be the driver

ver of the vehicle containing the explosives that heavily damaged the U.S. military facility in eastern Saudi Arabia.

Prince Nayef also refused comment on statements by Canadian intelligence services that another Saudi, Ahmad Ibrahim Mughassil, was the mastermind behind the Khobar bombing. "No information should be taken seriously if the Saudi source is not identified or if it is not released by the official Saudi news agency," the interior minister said.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that Syrian authorities refused to help Saudi Arabia capture Mughassil, a member of the militant Hizbollah, suspected by Saudi Arabia of planning further attacks. A Saudi official called the report "erroneous."

Both Iran and Syria have categorically denied any involvement in the bombing.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 4 Israeli-allied militiamen wounded

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Four Israeli-allied militiamen were wounded in a Hizbollah bomb attack on Wednesday in a border zone of South Lebanon occupied by the Jewish state, sources close to the militia said. A remote-controlled device exploded next to a patrol from the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia near Qantara in the central sector of the buffer strip, the sources said. A spokesman for Islamic Resistance, the military arm of the Hizbollah, claimed responsibility for the attack. Israeli forces retaliated by bombarding valleys near the scene of the blast. Twenty shells were fired in the space of half an hour, Lebanese police said without reporting casualties.

### UAE seizes 303 kilos of hashish

ABU DHABI (afp) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) police have seized around 303 kilograms of hashish smuggled from an Asian country, the biggest drugs haul in nearly a year, officials said Wednesday. The drugs were concealed in a water tank aboard a wooden boat that anchored at Khor port in Ras Al Khaimah near the strategic Straits of Hormuz. "There were two tanks, one for fuel and the other for water. We found another tank inside the water tank containing the drugs," said Jamal Al Tair, chief of the anti-narcotics squad. "They were concealed in a skiffed way. But we managed to discover the drugs after receiving information about the suspected boat," he told AFP. Mr. Tair said the drugs were busted on April 1 and the three smugglers who were seized aboard the boat came from a "neighbouring Asian country."

### Syria bans Dutch beef over 'mad cow' fears

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria said Wednesday it has banned imports of beef from the Netherlands for fear it is infected with "mad cow" disease. The Agriculture Ministry said the ban was in line with a decision last year to suspend imports of beef from countries where there had been outbreaks of "mad cow" disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Syria banned beef imports from Britain, Ireland, France and Germany three years ago, and now gets its meat from Belgium and New Zealand.

### Trinidad soccer player arrested in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — A prominent soccer player from Trinidad has been arrested on suspicion of embezzlement, police said. Police said Tuesday that they arrested David Nakhid the day after Lebanon's Al Ansar Club, which he plays for, demanded that he return funds that he shouldn't be holding. Al Ansar on Wednesday said the amount involved was \$12,000. Police earlier had put it at \$20,000. The club accused Mr. Nakhid of keeping the money rather than passing it on to a club in his native country in exchange for the recruitment of a player from the club, police said. Mr. Nakhid has said the money was his reward for bringing the player to Al Ansar from the club in Trinidad.

## Velayati vows to release Iranian diplomats said detained by Israel

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati vowed Wednesday that Iran would do everything it could to secure the release of four diplomats kidnapped 15 years ago in Lebanon and believed here to be in Israeli jails.

"We have numerous reasons (to believe) they are alive and in Israel and we will do anything possible within our principles to have our dear ones freed," Mr. Velayati told a press conference.

He stressed that Iran would not engage in direct negotiations with Israel over the case, but would not "spare any efforts within our principles."

Iran does not recognise the state of Israel and avoid contacts with its officials.

An Israeli human rights activist said last week that the four Iranian diplomats, long given up for dead, were alive and being held in an Israeli jail.

"I have confirmation from the Israeli side that these four Iranians have been detained in Israeli prisons for at least two years," said Ahmad Habibullah, director of a Nazareth-based Prisoners' Rights Association.

He said lawyers working with his association were drawing up a legal petition to force Israeli authorities to reveal information about the Iranians.

The four Iranians are Mohsen Mussawi, who was the charge d'affaires at Iran's embassy in Beirut, diplomat Ahmad Motevasselian, embassy driver Taghi Rastegar-Moghaddam and a photographer for the official Iranian news agency, Kazem Akhava.

The four were kidnapped on July 4, 1982, at a roadblock manned by the Lebanese forces militia north of Beirut.

In November 1990, the militia's chief, Samir Geagea, told relatives of the four that they were killed shortly after their kidnapping on the orders of the movement's intelligence chief Elie Hobeika, who is now a Lebanese government minister.

In November 1994, Iran's ambassador in Beirut, Hamayun Alizade, said he believed the four were still alive despite a report several days earlier in an Iranian newspaper that they were dead.

An Iranian diplomatic source in Beirut said Friday that Iran was following up on the case but did not elaborate.

Israel has not commented on the reports.

Analysts suggested that if indeed the four were alive and held in Israel, then Israel might be hoping to secure the release of a missing Israeli airman missing in Lebanon in return for the release of the Iranians.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 .....Ovide & the Gang  
14:30 .....Raw Toonage  
14:45 .....Curiosity Show  
15:10 They Came From Outer Space  
16:00 .....N.B.A. Basketball  
17:00 .....Out of This World  
17:30 .....French Programmes  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 .....Parenthood  
20:00 .....Cinema, Cinema  
20:30 The American Chart Show  
21:10 .....Kung Fu-The Legend  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:25 Feature Film: "In the Line of Duty — Smoke Jumpers"  
23:59 .....Tarzan

### PRAYER TIMES

04:49 .....Fajr  
06:09 .....Sunrise/Duha  
12:37 .....Dhuhr  
16:12 .....Asr  
19:05 .....Maghreb  
20:25 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweiffish, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.  
Terre Sancta Church Tel. 622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

### Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

### St. Ephraim Church

Tel. 771751.

### Armenian International Church

Tel. 827126

### Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

### German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

### The Latter-Day Saints

Tel. 654932.

### Church of Nazarene

Tel. 675691.

### The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

### Latin-speaking

Parish Tel. 614191.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

The effect of the cold air front will continue during the weekend. It will be cold, cloudy to partly cloudy. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly active, and seas choppy.

### Mini/Max. Temperatures

Amman .....04/08

Aqaba .....09/19

Deserts .....03/11

Jordan Valley .....08/18

### Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 10, Aqaba 20 Humidity

readings: Amman 75 per cent,

Aqaba 34 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim .....885446

Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab .....602507

Dr. Ayman Al Muntaseb 875748

Dr. Jamal Jbarah .....847351

Firas pharmacy .....661912

Ferdows pharmacy .....778336

Al Asema pharmacy .....637055

Nairoukh pharmacy .....623672

Al Salam pharmacy .....636730

Yacoub pharmacy .....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660

Najih pharmacy .....847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Baldr .....276852

Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ya'qoub Al Khatib 991772

Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111

Civil Defence Department .....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341

Civil Defence Emergency .....199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade .....617101

Blood Bank .....775121

### Highway Police

.....843402

### Traffic Police

.....896390

### Public Security Department

.....630321

### Hotel Complaints

.....605800

### Price Complaints

.....661176

### Water and Sewerage

Complaints .....897467

### Amman Municipality

Complaints .....787111

### Telephone Information (direct

telephone assistance) .....121

### Overseas Calls

.....010230

### Central Amman Telephone

Repairs .....623101

### Abdali Telephone Repairs

.....661101

### Jordan Television

.....773111

### Radio Jordan

.....774111

### Water Authority

.....680100

### Jordan Electricity Authority

.....815615

### Electric Power Company

.....636381

### RJ Flight Information

08-53200

### University Hospital

.....845845

### Al-Musabher Hospital

.....667279

### The Islamic, Abdali

666126/57

### Al-Abdi, Abdali

664146/46

### Italian, Al-Muhajreen

.....777101/5

### Al-Bashir

775111/26

### Army, Marka

891611/15

### Queen Alia Hospital

.....602240/50

### Amal Hospital

.....674155

### The Arab Centre for Health

Services .....865199

### ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

.....09/983323

Zarqa National Hospital

.....09/900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09/986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

.....09/990990

### IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

# Home News

Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday, April 10-11, 1997

3

## PNA administrative workshop opens in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour Wednesday opened a five-day workshop on administrative development in the Palestine National Authority (PNA).  
Dr. Ensour emphasised Jordan's readiness to provide social, economic and political assistance to the Palestinians in order that they achieve their national aspirations.  
He lauded Jordanian-Palestinian relations and said that the Palestinian people enjoy a great deal of expertise and skill, enabling them to establish their modern, independent state on a solid foundation.  
Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League Saeed Kamal described the league as giving due attention to development in the Palestinian territories as part of its contribution towards peace and stability in the region.  
The Arab League has been in contact with various international organisations, enlisting their aid



Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour Wednesday opens a five-day workshop on administrative development in the Palestine National Authority (PNA) (Petra photo)

that the Palestinians might implement their reconstruction programmes in Palestine, he added.

Mr. Kamal maintained that the Palestinians require peace and security in order to forge ahead

with efforts, skills and potential to build their nation.

Workshop participants are slated to review topics related to planning, administrative policies, the roles of the private and public

sectors, developing budgets, and implementing administrative projects.

The workshop, held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), has been jointly organised by Jordan, the Arab League and the PNA.

## 'Jordan committed to support of Palestinians'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday described Jordan as committed to supporting Palestinians in regaining their rights on their national soil.

At a meeting with Palestine Minister of Local Government Saeb Erekat, Dr. Majali maintained the importance of Palestinians and the Israelis to resume dialogue in order to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

The Palestinian cause is receiving worldwide support, the prime minister affirmed, and Israel should honour its commitments as stipulated in the peace accords.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with Palestinian-Jordanian relations.

They also reviewed the latest developments in the occupied Arab territories in light of Israeli plans to build Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Omar Khatib.

Dr. Majali returned to Amman Tuesday evening after accompanying His Majesty King Hussein to talks with U.S. officials.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday meets with Palestine Minister of Local Government Saeb Erekat to discuss issues related to the rights of Palestinians. Also attending the meeting is Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh (Petra photo)

Following the meeting, Dr. Erekat told Jordan Television that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat instructed him to meet with the prime minister in order to brief Jordanian officials on the latest developments in Palestine.

He said that the Palestinian National Authority has received an invitation from the United States to send a delegation to Washington.

Dr. Erekat added that he and Palestinian senior official Mahmoud Abbas would go to Washington this week for consultations on ways to give momentum to the peace process.

The Palestinians will focus on a number of necessary principles based on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in order to

enable the peace process to succeed, he said.

He said that talks will also focus on the inception of final status negotiations as well as halting settlement construction on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

The Palestinians only request the implementation of previously signed accords, Dr. Erekat concluded.

## Women stress social, human rights in roundtable

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the second day of international roundtable meetings on women's human rights, Chairperson Salma Khan, of the United Nations Supervisory Body of the Implementation of Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, presented a report entitled: "Social and Human Rights of Women and Women's Conventions: Strategies for Action."

Ms. Khan called on the signatory governments of this convention to adopt the required measures in order to implement provisions in a manner which would fully ensure the fulfil-

ment of their commitments.

Florence Butegwa, from Uganda, presented a report entitled "Promoting Women's Equality through Legal Reform" on the status of women in Africa and strategies in the face of negative traditional and social attitudes towards women.

Latifa Bennani Smires, a member of the Moroccan parliament, presented a paper covering women's political participation and outlined the participation of Moroccan women in political life.

On Tuesday, HRH Princess Basma addressed the opening session of the roundtable meetings entitled "Equal

Opportunities for Women: A Question of Rights and Humanity" and attributed inequality between the sexes to obsolete social practices dating back to the era before Islam and perpetuated by legal, political, social and cultural mores currently prevailing in the Arab World and elsewhere.

The three-day international roundtable concludes here today with the participants adopting a common strategy to work towards the improvement of women's status in their respective societies.

The roundtable was attended by delegates from 17 countries.

## Court of Appeals reverses decision to incarcerate editor

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Court of Appeals Wednesday overruled a recent Court of First Instance ruling, sentencing a former weekly tabloid editor to six months imprisonment with an additional fine of JD 500.

Abdullah Bani Issa, former editor of the weekly Al Hiwar, was found guilty in January, by the Amman Court of First Instance, of violating the Press and Publications Law.

At the time, the court stated that Mr. Bani Issa permitted the publication of material, considered slanderous to His Majesty King Hussein, and published news items covering an illegal organisation Hezb Al Tahrir (The Liberation Party).

The prosecution charged that Mr. Bani Issa permitted the publication of an interview with Atta Abu Rishteh, spokesman of the illegal Hezb Al Tahrir, in October of 1995.

Mr. Abu Rishteh was sentenced to a term of three-years imprisonment by the State Security Court in February of 1996 for slandering King Hussein in the October newspaper interview.

The verdict was later ratified by the Court of Cassation.

In its Wednesday ruling, however, the Court of Appeals headed by Justice Mohammad Sa'ed Nasser and including Justices Mohammad Freihah and Sameh Dweik, ruled that the content of the interview was neither criminal nor slanderous.

"Mr. Abu Rishteh was merely informing the pub-

lic of the current situation, which concerns local, Arab and Islamic societies, and the court found nothing [which could have been construed as] slanderous to the King," the Court of Appeals stated.

The defendant was merely stating his own opinion in the interview, the court added.

"I am very happy with the court's decision," Mr. Bani Issa said. "I have greatly worried and the spectre of imprisonment has haunted me every minute since I was sentenced in January."

Mr. Bani Issa had pleaded not guilty to the charges and told the prosecutor during interrogation that there was a press code which allowed for the publication of interviews with Hezb Al Tahrir officials. He also said that

the interview was not slanderous to the King.

When testifying at the State Security Court, Mr. Bani Issa maintained that he resolved to publish the interview as he saw no member of the Royal Family mentioned therein.

Al Hiwar weekly went bankrupt five months after its establishment and Mr. Bani Issa is now the editor of the weekly Al Hayat.

Mr. Abu Rishteh has been arrested several times over the past 10 years for alleged militant activities and for affiliation with Hezb Al Tahrir, a fundamentalist group which does not recognise any existing Arab or Muslim regime and calls for the establishment of a caliphate-style Islamic state.

## Ministry describes HCAE decision as 'interference'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Interior Wednesday described a decision by the Higher Council of Arab Engineers (HCAE) to form an engineers' committee to resist normalisation with Israel with an office in Amman as "interference in Jordan's internal affairs."

The local press Wednesday reported that the HCAE, which recently convened in Tunis, has formed the anti-normalisation committee with headquarters in Amman. "A ministry official said: 'The Ministry of Interior would like to state clearly that such decision is considered as interference in Jordan's internal affairs.'"

He said that the ministry would take action to prevent such a committee from locating in Amman.

The report, which was published in Al Ra'i Arabic daily, stated that a Jordanian Engineers Association team took part in the HCAE meeting as well as in the Arab Engineers Union meeting which ended Saturday.

The report quoted the

HCAE as asserting that the engineers have a role to play in uniting the nation and confronting major challenges facing the Arab World.

"The building of Jewish settlements in occupied Arab lands, the change in character of Arab Jerusalem, the Judaisation and confiscation of Arab lands clearly reflect the Zionist state's aggressive nature and intention to prevent the Palestinians from achieving their national goals," the HCAE stated.

"The HCAE commends Arab states' backing for Palestinian rights and praises the Arab League's latest decision, issued in Cairo, which called for freezing all forms of normalisation or cooperation with the Zionist state," it said.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) Deputy President Hosni Abu Ghaida denied that the decision to form this committee was taken by the HCAE and stated instead that the initiative came from the 15-member Arab Engineers Union.

## Ministry to continue campaign against polio

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Health will Saturday commence the second phase of a polio immunisation campaign among children up to five years of age.

A ministry official Wednesday said that the campaign will cover all governorates and be conducted free of charge through hospitals and health centres.

The campaign is being implemented in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Rotary Club of Jordan, the official explained.

It serves as prevention to protect children in implementation of WHO and UNICEF recommendations, which organisations also provided the polio vaccine, the ministry said.

No polio case has been reported in Jordan over the past two years, it affirmed.

The first phase of the campaign was conducted by the ministry in the first two weeks of last month when nearly 750,000 children were inoculated in various governorates, the min-

istry stated.

The campaign is being launched every year, according to the ministry, with the hope of completely eradicating the disease by the year 2000.

The vaccines are also to be administered through the Royal Medical Services of the Jordan Armed Forces, the University of Jordan Hospital and clinics run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The ministry stated that the vaccinations will be administered between eight in the morning and four in the afternoon.

Mobile clinics will travel to more remote areas and the badia regions to administer the vaccine, the ministry said.

The vaccine will be administered to children regardless of their having received the vaccination in previous years, it stated.

## Investigations deem car burning an act of sabotage

AMMAN (J.T.) — Police are offering a JD10,000 reward for anyone providing information which might lead to the apprehension of a person or persons involved in a suspected act of arson.

Investigations in the burning of a car of the son of General Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, responsible for an official inquiry into the shooting of Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian last month, indicated that it was, indeed, an act of sabotage.

The vehicle, a Mercedes Benz, belonging to Abdul Halim Kilani, was engulfed by fire at approximately 3:30 a.m. in Jabal Weibdeh.

Initial police reports maintained that a short circuit in the car's battery caused the fire.

However, Tuesday evening, officials revealed that further investigations pointed to arson.

Informed sources told the Jordan Times Wednesday that police found burnt pieces of carpet and tyre rubbers under Abdul Halim Kilani's car as well as on the car's roof.

Police detected gasoline on the burnt material, one source said.

Further, the source maintained that police found a piece of carpet soaked with gasoline under a second car which belonged to Abdul Halim Kilani's mother, but was not lit.

Mr. Mohammad Rasoul Kilani, a retired army general, is the head of the investigation committee in the case of Corporal Ahmad Dakamseh, a Jordanian soldier who opened fire on Israeli schoolgirls in the Baqoura area killing seven and wounding five.

Subsequent to his arrest, Mr. Dakamseh told interrogators that he committed the shooting to protect his military honour and national dignity after being ridiculed and provoked by the girls while praying.

## Pianist delivers 'flawless' recital

By Jean-Claude Elias  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Sunday night at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman, pianist Yasser Mukhtar delivered a performance that can only be described as flawless. The German-Egyptian musician used a palette of works going from straightforward classical Haydn to almost jazzy, contemporary Japanese composer T. Yamashita, to delight an audience captivated by his style.

Mukhtar opened the recital with Mozart's variations on "Ah, vous dirais-je maman," the French origin of the well-known children's "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" song. With this deceptively simple composition, the pianist managed to impose an exceptionally clear, limpid technique and delight the many youngsters in the audience. This was followed by Haydn's sonata in G major. The adagio movement was played with marvelous sustain effects, producing the most beautiful overtones ever heard on the Philadelphia's Steinway grand piano.

Yasser Mukhtar sailed with equal virtuosity through the majestic Grande Polonoise by Chopin, the witty, modern Six Little Pieces for Piano by Yamashita, the original variations on an Egyptian folk song by Gamal Abdul Rahim, Robert Schumann's Scenes of Childhood, which included the popular Träumerei (Daydream) and the Franz Liszt superb Hungarian Rhapsody in E major as a finale.

Mukhtar, born in Cairo in 1968, possesses all the technical qualities that make a concert pianist: excellent control of dynamics, memory — all but one piece were played without score sheets — personal presence and of course a good knowledge of the classical repertoire. He has, however, two other outstanding qualities: he handles the keyboard with extreme care, his forte being strong but never aggressive and his piano amazing, and above all, Yasser Mukhtar has the one quality that every performer should have, the one that is more important than technique: he is deeply, truly, genuinely musical.

## What's Going On

### FILMS

"Brigada central" (pis 3 and 4) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

"On Deadly Ground" at the American Center, Abdoun on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

"In a Brilliant Light — Van Gogh in Arles" (with commentary in Arabic by Adnan Al Sharif) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Display of products, for adults and children in celebration of Eid Al Adha, by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NAF) at the NAF premises, off Wadi Saqra (Tel. 69141/2), until April 16.

\* Exhibition by the San Francisco-based Palestinian-American architectural photographer Said Hisham Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque," until May 8. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

\* Paintings by Vian Shamounki at the Jordan Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 25 (Tel. 623297).

\* Paintings by Yassin Al Mohammadani at the Orient Gallery, Shmeisani (Tel. 681303/4), until April 28.

\* Paintings by Patricia Châtelain at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 27.

\* The African ceramic arts exhibition at Al Bait Furniture Establishment premises, Mecca Street, until April 10.

\* Artworks by Egyptian artist Jamil Shafiq entitled "Black and White" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until April 10.



## N. Korea to respond next week to peace talks offer

SEOUL (R) — North Korea has told the United States and South Korea it will respond next week to a proposal for peace talks amid expectations that near-famine will push it to accept the offer, albeit with strings attached.

Seoul officials said Wednesday senior diplomats of the two Koreas and the United States were due to meet in New York on April 16 to hear the answer.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen, who arrived in Seoul Wednesday to discuss security issues as North Korea descends into a food crisis, urged Pyongyang to work with Seoul and Washington to tackle the disaster.

Fears of imminent human catastrophe were heightened after reports Tuesday that North Korea's Stalinist government told aid agencies that 134 children had died of malnutrition.

"I think the evidence is mounting that it appears to be very severe," Cohen told reporters, referring to food shortages created by two consecutive years of devastating floods.

"Hopefully it will allow us to (go ahead) with the four-party talks in the very near future," Cohen said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton and his South Korean counterpart Kim Young-Sam proposed four-way peace talks one year ago between the two Koreas, the United States and

China. The aim is to create a lasting peace to replace a truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

"North Korea is expected to formally respond to the New York briefing last month by the United States and South Korea on the four-party talks," a Seoul official told Reuters.

International relief efforts for North Korea have gathered pace in the past week. South Korea and the United States have said they are considering supplying more aid.

Images of hungry North Korean children have sparked an outpouring of public sympathy in South Korea, and citizens are digging into their pockets to raise millions of dollars for their brethren across the border.

A senior South Korean government official said Seoul had decided to boost its contribution to the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP), which is seeking \$95.5 million — up from an initial \$41.6 million — to buy 200,000 tonnes of food.

"We are still discussing the size of the increase. We will also have to consult with the United States," he said.

South Korea pledged \$6 million to the original WFP appeal and the United States \$10 million. Washington said Tuesday it was considering raising its contribution.

"I think our humanitarian gestures will help create a better atmosphere for the talks,"

the official said. "I expect a favourable response from Pyongyang but I would be surprised if they agreed to the proposal with no strings attached."

A South Korean unification ministry official said: "I think the North will seek guarantees for improved ties with Washington."

Cohen repeated Washington's fears that the food crisis could prompt North Korea's 1.1 million-strong military to revolt against its government or strike out against the South in a last desperate cold war gambit.

"We have no way of predicting that right now and so what we have to have is a very strong deterrent capability plus a willingness to work with the South Koreans to solve this crisis," he told reporters.

The United States has 37,000 troops in South Korea and Cohen caused a stir this week when he said they would remain in Korea indefinitely even if the two Koreas made peace and united.

Cohen said the United States was moving cautiously on food aid for the North and that it would be handled only in conjunction with South Korea and other countries.

"We will work very closely with our South Korean allies to see where we go from here," Cohen said.



A Confi supermarket employee checks packaged food products for tampering, after contaminated food was found in the store in the Bavarian town of Regensburg Tuesday. A blackmailer wanting to extort unpolished diamonds worth \$15 million, is threatening to contaminate products from Nestle enterprises (Reuters photo)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'Schroeder best candidate against Kohl'

BONN (AFP) — Gerhard Schroeder would be the Social Democrats' best candidate against Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1998, in the view of nearly two-thirds of German voters, according to an opinion poll published Wednesday by the weekly Die Woche. The poll by the Forsa Institute found that 65 per cent of voters believed the Lower Saxony premier had the best chance, while only 21 per cent believed party chief Oskar Lafontaine should be the SPD's candidate. Among SPD supporters, 67 per cent thought Schroeder was best-suited to beat Kohl. The chancellor last week announced his intention to run for a fifth term, but the SPD leadership has decided not to choose its candidate until the start of 1998 or next April at the latest.

### Hen lays eggs with pictures of solar eclipse

HONG KONG (AFP) — A hen has laid three eggs covered in markings resembling a solar eclipse which occurred in China last month, it was reported on Wednesday. The hen laid the three eggs two days after pecking around the family yard in Lunghua county in Hebei province during the solar eclipse on March 9, the China backed New Evening Post said. The event has created lively interest. Owner Li Fulun and his family were also watching the solar eclipse which coincided with a rare appearance by the Hale-Bopp comet. Such an event has only been recorded three times — in May 1882 in Egypt, in May 1947 in Brazil and November 1948 in Kenya.

### Leopard has field day in farmer's sheep pen

BEIJING (AFP) — Afraid to kill an animal under state protection, a herdsman in China's remote west allowed a snow leopard to go on a killing spree in his sheep pen for six days while he waited for authorities to arrive, the China daily said Wednesday. Eziz, who lives near Taxkorgan, Xinjiang province — just across the border from Tajikistan — recently found three of the endangered big cats feasting on his sheep. Two fled but the third, described as a male cub, was unable to escape the pen, the newspaper said. He sent his son to file a report on horseback, but the trip to the county seat took six days due to icy and precipitous mountainous conditions. By the time authorities arrived, the snow leopard had killed and eaten 20 sheep, it said. With great difficulty, the animal was brought overland from the site, eventually being shipped to the zoo in the regional capital of Urumqi, 1,900 kilometres away. The article praised Eziz for his upright conduct but made no mention of official compensation for his losses. The cat now weighs 30 kilograms, it said, quoting zoo officials.

### Female orgasm pill just fantasy — researchers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Sex researchers have poured cold water over what they called a misleading report suggesting they were working on a pill for female orgasms. "That's just somebody's fantasy," said Beverly Whipple, a researcher at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Whipple said that contrary to some media reports, she and other Rutgers University researchers have not isolated a chemical that produces orgasms in women, and such a pill is not on the horizon. Whipple said that the Rutgers research team had discovered a brain chemical in rats which appears to be involved in genital stimulation. The brain chemical does not use the spinal cord, but, instead, acts through a nerve pathway in the front of the body that travels from the genital area to the brain. No such chemical has yet been found in humans, Whipple said. The researchers also reported last year that women paralysed from the chest down could achieve orgasm through self-stimulation, something that was thought to be impossible.

### Tourist dies in 'deplorable' incident — Cuba

HAVANA (R) — The Cuban Foreign Ministry said Tuesday a Danish tourist had been killed in a "deplorable incident" after entering a restricted military zone. Danish media reports said earlier that the tourist, Joachim Loevschall, 26, was apparently shot by soldiers after entering the zone and ignoring warnings to leave. Cuban Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mariela Ferriol was quoted by the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina as saying the incident occurred at dawn on March 29. Ferriol did not give further details of the incident, or say where it took place, noting the dead man's family had asked for the Cuban Foreign Ministry to handle the case with extreme discretion. Ferriol said the Dane was not carrying any documentation at the time of the incident and so was not identified until last Friday. Ferriol added the ministry had immediately informed Danish authorities of the incident and begun an investigation into the case.

### Ireland hosts Eurovision song contest

GENEVA (AFP) — Ireland will host the Eurovision song contest on May 3 for the third time in as many years, with 25 countries vying for the region's top pop-song laurels, the European Broadcasting Union has said. Irish public broadcaster Ite in Dublin will produce the gala finals, to be seen by a potential audience of 600 million from the North Atlantic Ocean to the Ural mountains in Russia and beyond, it said. The contest has been run by the union, which represents professional broadcasters in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, since 1956. Ireland has produced the awards seven times since 1971, including four times in the 1990s, by virtue of its artists winning the top prize so often.

### Argentina recognises prostitution as profession

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Women and men working as prostitutes, including transvestites, will now have their professions recognized as part of the Argentine economy, the government said Monday. The work will be categorized under an unclassified section of unskilled and industrial work, the National Institute of Statistics and the Census said. The new category affects women working as prostitutes and men dressed as women who sell sex for a living, the institute said. The Association of Argentine Prostitutes said that there were 10,000 people working as prostitutes in the country.

### 'One million U.S. children abused, neglected'

WASHINGTON (R) — Child abuse and neglect remain at record high levels in the United States, with about one million substantiated cases a year and many more cases going unreported, U.S. officials said Tuesday. Data from 1995, the most recent available, showed that for the third consecutive year one million children were abused or neglected, half under the age of eight. About 1,000 children were known to have died from abuse or neglect that year, although the true number could be twice as high. "Child abuse and neglect continue to be a shameful tragedy in our country, and every one of us has a stake in preventing it," Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said in a statement. The numbers, however, seem to have leveled off although at an unacceptably high level after four years of steady increases, the Department of Health and Human Services said.

## India rulers hold out talks offer to Congress

NEW DELHI (R) — India's ruling United Front Coalition asked the rebellious Congress Party Wednesday to start talks to resolve an 11-day-old political crisis, raising expectations of an agreement to avert mid-term polls.

"We expect the talks to start in the course of the day," United Front spokesman Jaipal Reddy told reporters.

The coalition had sent a formal letter to the Congress Party Wednesday morning proposing talks, Reddy said. Senior Congress leader Ved Prakash told Reuters it would be around Thursday evening before the political picture became clearer.

News that the two sides were preparing for talks raised hopes that they could resolve their differences before a vote of confidence in parliament set for Friday.

The Bombay bourse's benchmark index ended up a provisional 131.80 points, or 3.74 per cent, at 3,652.29, buoyed by hopes that an end to the political turmoil would mean passing an investor-friendly budget. The budget, which would slash corporate and personal income tax rates, has been held hostage by the political uncertainty.

Congress Party President

Sitaram Kesri sparked the crisis on March 30 when he announced the withdrawal of his party's make-or-break support for Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's minority centre-left coalition.

But Tuesday, Kesri said he was willing to hold talks with the United Front, and wanted "respect, not power."

The alliance named a three-member panel for the talks, comprising Harkishan Singh Surjeet, general secretary of the Communist Party of India-Marxist, Jammu and Kashmir State Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and Andhra Pradesh State Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. United Front officials said.

"For stability, it is desirable that Congress has a say in governance," said a senior Congress leader, who asked not to be identified.

"The leader can be selected by consensus," he said.

Kesri has demanded that Deve Gowda, who assumed power last June after inconclusive general elections, step down. But the United Front has resisted the demand.

Roddy declined to comment on the leadership question when asked if the coalition would agree to drop Deve Gowda.

## Indian, Pakistani ministers break ice at talks

NEW DELHI (R) — India and Pakistan held confidence-building talks on Wednesday amid rising hopes the long-time foes will be able to defuse half a century of tensions.

The foreign ministers of the South Asian neighbours said they were pleased with their first talks since bilateral negotiations resumed last month after a three-year hiatus.

Married by diplomatic sniping and an insurgency in divided Kashmir.

"It was our first one-to-one meeting, and I am very satisfied with it," Pakistani Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan told reporters after a 90-minute breakfast meeting in New Delhi with his Indian counterpart, Inder Kumar Gujral.

"He represents the views of both of us. I endorse everything that he said," said Gujral, who had hugged the visiting minister when he arrived for the talks at a former prince's palace.

Hands clasped, the two stood before cameras and photographers before entering the

building, still holding hands.

The two ministers had planned to have up to two days of talks this week but were forced to curtail the agenda because of a political crisis threatening Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's government, which faces a vote of confidence on Friday.

But government sources said an easing of tension between Deve Gowda's ruling coalition and the rival Congress Party on Tuesday had increased the chances Gujral would remain foreign minister after a parliamentary vote of confidence on Friday.

That prospect dispelled much of the uncertainty that had clouded the talks before they started, they said.

"The two ministers who had not met as ministers before had an extremely warm and cordial interaction," an Indian foreign ministry spokesman said.

"They were briefly able to touch on a number of important issues. They both have given clear directions to their foreign secretaries to maintain

the tempo of the ongoing dialogue."

The two nations, which have fought three wars since independence in 1947, resumed high-level talks last month when their foreign secretaries — the highest-ranking civil servants in the foreign ministries — held four days of negotiations.

Khan, who was in New Delhi to attend a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement that ended on Tuesday, and Gujral, used their first meeting to try to build personal rapport.

"The ice we wanted to break so that future talks and negotiations can carry on in the same atmosphere," said Khan, who had acknowledged on Tuesday that the political turmoil in New Delhi had prevented more substantive talks.

Gujral and Khan said they hoped the foreign secretaries would hold another round of talks in Islamabad before a summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) set for May 12-14 in the Maldives capital, Male.

Deve Gowda and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were expected to meet on the margins of the SAARC meeting.

"We have built the confidence amongst each other, between the external affairs minister of India and myself, and hopefully the next meeting of our foreign secretaries and officials will be in Islamabad," Khan said.

"We'll try our level best, and I'll also try, that that meeting of the foreign secretaries is before Male."

Asked if he and Gujral had discussed Kashmir over breakfast, Khan said: "Insha'allah (God willing), the foreign secretaries, when they meet, they will meet to discuss all issues." Pakistan considers Kashmir to be the core issue in the talks but, in a shift of strategy from 1993, has said it no longer insists that the two nations make progress towards resolving the Kashmir dispute before tackling other issues.

## U.S. girls reach puberty earlier than commonly believed

CHICAGO (AP) — American girls reach puberty earlier than commonly believed, with nearly half of black girls and 15 per cent of white ones beginning to develop sexually by age 8, a study indicates.

The study raises troubling questions about whether environmental estrogens, chemicals that mimic the female hormone estrogen, are bringing on puberty at an earlier age.

It also suggests that sex education should begin sooner than it often does, researchers said.

"I don't think parents, teachers or society in general have been really thinking of children that young ... Having to deal with puberty," said the study's lead author, Marcia E. Herman-Giddens of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The research is in the April issue of the Journal of Pediatrics, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Environmental estrogens occur from the breakdown of chemicals in products ranging from pesticides to plastic wrap. Real estrogen is used in some hair products, including pomades primarily marketed to blacks, said Herman-Giddens, an adjunct

professor of maternal and child health.

She said research is needed to know whether real estrogen in products and environmental estrogen can affect sexual development.

The study involved 17,000 girls ages 3 through 12. They were seen in 65 pediatric practices around the country. About 1,600 of the girls, or 9.6 per cent, were black.

At age 8, 48.3 per cent of black girls and 14.7 per cent of white girls had begun developing breasts, pubic hair or both.

Menstruation occurred at 12.16 years in blacks on average and at 12.88 years in whites.

The average age of menstruation for white girls has been unchanged for 45 years, Herman-Giddens said.

For black girls, the average is about four months younger than it was 30 years ago, when poor nutrition and poverty, which can delay puberty, afflicted more blacks, she said. "I think we may be seeing a catch-up," Herman-Giddens said.

She acknowledged that her findings may have been skewed if a significant number of the girls were brought to their doctors because of concerns that they were developing too early sexual

ly.

The study, and other research, suggest that blacks and whites have some inherent differences in sexual development.

Herman-Giddens said the findings also suggest that some girls who have been diagnosed with early puberty, and perhaps given drugs to delay it, may be developing normally.

She said medical textbooks typically suggest the age of sexual development is much later, based on decades-old statistics from England taken from a relatively small number of white girls who were mostly in foster care.

An expert not involved in the study called the work very important but said it will probably not change doctors' practices.

"We've always known that there was a range of development," said Dr. Marianne Felice, chief of adolescent medicine at the University of Maryland. "It may vary by race, it may vary by nutritional status and it may also vary by ... How old the mothers were or how old the older sisters were when they hit the same landmarks in sexual characteristics."

## TWA offers compensation to families of Flight 800

NEW YORK (AFP) — TWA has offered \$75,000 for each of the 230 people killed in July when a Paris-bound Boeing 747 crashed near New York, a representative for 55 families said Tuesday.

TWA made the offer, which is required under the Warsaw convention, in letters dated April 4.

"This letter, it's nothing, a pure formality," said Lee Kreindler, a New York lawyer representing the families of 55 victims.

"TWA said from the very beginning it would do it," he said.

"This doesn't affect in any way the compensation we could get in court."

Kreindler's suit is asking for \$75 million for each of the victims if a mechanical failure is found responsible for the crash. TWA had no immediate comment.

Kreindler said that five of his clients had already received an advance from TWA because of hardship. Kreindler won \$500 million for the families of the victims of a Pan Am Boeing Jumbo jet that exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988 because of a bomb blast.

## Australian troops to be sent to help aborigines

CANBERRA (R) — Australia Wednesday launched a controversial A\$5 million (\$4 million) scheme to send troops into outback aboriginal camps to combat Third World health and living conditions.

A small test programme will begin soon in two isolated desert communities and could eventually be extended to scores of the more than 250 aboriginal villages desperate for better health services, housing, sewerage and water supplies.

"This national initiative will utilise the skills and resources of the Australian army to deliver urgently-needed water and health infrastructure to remote indigenous communities," aboriginal Affairs Minister John Herron said in announcing details of the programme.

Teams of up to 40 army engineers will be sent to two aboriginal settlements to set up the first of six pilot projects for the programme. Lieutenant-Colonel David

Kibbey said.

"(The) Army welcomes the opportunity provided by government to help rectify the health problems that have persisted for so long," he told journalists.

"We, like most Australians, have been disappointed that more progress has not been made to fix the health problems. We are ... Determined to make a difference."

"We are even going to take some vets into the field to help with the health of the dogs and other animals so that the children will not be re-infected."

Aborigines account for only 260,000 out of Australia's total population of 18 million. They have a markedly shorter life expectancy than other Australians and are the most deprived group in what is one of the region's richest countries.

But aboriginal leaders have branded Herron's army scheme a "white fella's" stunt that would not help improve conditions.





Floodwaters surround houses south of Fargo, North Dakota, along the Red River, on Tuesday. The crest is expected to reach Fargo and Morehead Thursday or Friday (Reuters photo)

## Rising rivers threaten northern U.S. plains

FARGO, N.D. (R) — Thousands of volunteers directed to trouble spots along the bulging Minnesota River to pile sandbags by New Ulm and North Mankato.

Upstream in Appleton, Minnesota, a mass of volunteers rescued the town from the cresting Pomme De Terre river. A floating wooden crate damaged a sandbag dike late on Monday and hundreds answered the call to repair the breach.

"They put out a call over four to five counties. There were 300 people from the (surrounding) county alone and we even had a busload of kids that came in from Minneapolis," a spokesman at the Swift County Sheriff's

Office said. But some residents were not so fortunate. Several towns and isolated farmhouses had to be evacuated with the aid of helicopters and military vehicles after becoming surrounded by the floodwaters.

Thousands of people across the Minnesota and North Dakota remained without electricity or heat after high-voltage towers were toppled by a powerful weekend storm whipped by strong winds. Repairs may take weeks, authorities warned.

Four people have died since the weekend storm. A man in Lankin, North Dakota, was discovered frozen a short distance away from his stranded pickup truck. A boy died in a house-fire in Lisbon, North Dakota, when candles overturned.

Across the Canadian border in Winnipeg, Manitoba, two men died after the record-smashing snowstorm dumped 57 centimetres on the city. One man suffocated when the snow tunnel he was digging collapsed on top of him. The other suffered a heart attack clearing snow from around his home.

Students at North Dakota State University in Fargo were excused from class to help fill and stack sandbags along the city's temporary dikes.

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Some of his party colleagues and relatives are demanding an end to the ex-president's love affair with his fellow Jatiya party member.

The issue apparently forced a perplexed Ershad to go for a "do-or-die" decision that might devastate his political career, Jatiya leaders, who declined to be identified, told Reuters.

"He will not listen to us, he is just crazy about that woman," one said.

Lieutenant-General Ershad, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1982, was deposed in an opposition-led people's uprising in

## Zaire rebels head to second city

### Artillery fire shatters the silence in Lubumbashi

LUBUMBASHI, Zaire (R) — Artillery fire shattered the silence in Zaire's second city Lubumbashi on Wednesday as rebels pressed on, meeting stiff resistance from diehard government troops.

The thud of heavy artillery could be heard in the deserted streets of the city, coming from several kilometres to the south, after noon local time (1000 GMT). It died away quickly. Gunfire also erupted.

Residents said soldiers were seizing vehicles moving in the town, where only a handful of shops opened.

Expatriate and business sources in the city said contacts in the town of Likasi, 120 kilometres away to the northwest on a main railway line, reported that it had fallen to the rebels on Tuesday night.

Zambian sources in Ndola, near the Zairean border, said the rebels also seized the town of Sakania

just across the frontier and some 200 kilometres from Lubumbashi on Wednesday.

After weeks of waiting, the residents of Lubumbashi thought their day had come on Monday after rebels, emerging from nowhere, took the border town of Kipushi just 30 kilometres away.

But the advance was halted by members of Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko's elite DSP presidential guard who said they had repulsed the enemy, killing many of them.

The DSP, numbering one full division, have more weapons and are generally better disciplined than the rest of Zaire's ragged army that has distinguished itself in looting but has put up little resistance against the rebels.

Their defined role is to protect Mobutu and vital national interests. As such they have been concentrated in northern Ghadilite where

Mobutu has a preferred jungle palace, and in Shaba province, which produces copper wealth.

Rebel leader Laurent Kabila's tactic now seems to be to wait until his forces suffocate the city from the other directions in which they were approaching — from Kasembo in the northwest and from Likasi.

"We are meeting stiff resistance in Lubumbashi but it is something we expected," he told reporters in the newly captured diamond city Mbuji-Mayi.

"We are moving in many columns so they don't know what is coming after the first salvo."

Likasi, south of the captured Tenke Fungurume site where one of the world's biggest copper mines is to be established, is a major centre for the state-owned copper concern Gécamines which dominates the economy of the pro-autonomy region, Shaba.

Residents in Kolwezi, another mining town, notorious for the 1978 massacre of Belgian expatriates in one of Shaba's secessionist wars, said all was quiet there on Wednesday.

In Lubumbashi itself, a city of a million people close to Zambia, at least two planes arrived overnight, leading to speculation they were carrying DSP reinforcements and would evacuate families of the military.

A state of emergency declared by Mobutu on Tuesday had no immediate apparent effect in Shaba, whose civilian governor Kyungu Wa Kumwamba said he was still in charge despite the nomination elsewhere of military governors.

At least one brigade of Lubumbashi's soldiers changed sides on Monday as the rebel arrival looked imminent, but others appeared to have stayed at their posts.

## U.N. official meets Serb leaders, urges them to vote

ZAGREB (AFP) — The U.N. administrator of Serb-held eastern Slavonia met local Serb leaders Wednesday and urged them to persuade the Serbs to vote in Sunday's crucial polls, a U.N. spokesman said.

The administrator, Jacques Klein, met Vojislav Stanimirovic, head of the local Serb party, and Goran Hadzic, the "president" of the region who is reportedly on a list of people regarded as war criminals by Zagreb, spokesman Douglas Coffman told AFP.

Klein "called for support from the leadership to ensure people participate," Coffman said. Eastern Slavonia, the last Serb-held part of Croatia, was captured by rebel Serbs in 1991. Sunday's elections will be a key step in returning the region to Croatian control, a prospect some Serbs view with unease, fearing reprisals.

The local Serb assembly decided Tuesday to postpone a final decision on whether to take part in the polls until a last minute meeting Friday.

They said they were in favour of taking part provided certain conditions were met.

These were that Serbs who had not yet received the necessary Croatian documents be allowed to vote and that Belgrade guarantee they could have dual Yugoslav-Croatian nationality. Coffman said that the assembly's decision was "unfortunate" and added that Stanimirovic and Hadzic had told Untas after Wednesday's meeting that they would urge the Serbs to take part in the polls.

## Poll experts tip more election gains for U.K.'s Labour Party

LONDON (R) — Britain's top election experts Wednesday increased their forecasts for a large Labour majority as the ruling Conservatives made no progress in clawing back a huge opposition lead in public opinion polls.

In a poll of 20 political experts on their predictions for the outcome of the May 1 general election, the mean forecast pointed to an 83-seat Labour majority in the 659-seat House of Commons, up from a 77-seat average prediction they gave a week ago.

Nineteen of the 20 members of the Reuters panel believe Labour will win the election — one expects a hung parliament — and six expect a majority of more than 100 seats for Labour after 18 years in opposition.

Paul Whitley, lecturer at the University of Sheffield, said experts were revising their predictions up because the Labour lead in public opinion polls had not diminished.

There is no evidence that Conservative support is re-emerging. As we go along, the possibility of a Labour

landslide becomes greater," he said.

The predictions in the Reuters survey ranged from David Carlton, lecturer in politics at the University of Warwick, who predicts a hung parliament, to John Curtice at the University of Strathclyde, who forecasts a 185-seat majority for Labour.

But although the experts are increasing their predictions for Labour as the election nears, they still fall well behind the levels of support for Labour being registered in public opinion polls.

While the experts on average showed Labour with a 10-point lead over the Conservatives with 45 per cent of the vote, most opinion polls put the gap between the two main parties at 20 percentage points or more.

The latest Reuters/NOP opinion poll published Monday showed Labour support at 51 per cent, 21 points ahead of the Conservatives. Translated into seats under a widely-used formula devised by political analysts Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, this would give

Labour a 221-seat majority.

Ivor Crewe, vice-chancellor at the University of Essex, believes the explanation for the gap between public polls and the opinion of the Reuters panel was two-fold.

"The first is that because we have never witnessed in living memory a lead of this magnitude by any party, nobody can believe it," said Crewe. "And second, because they can't believe, they think it will have to come down."

Issues uppermost in voters' minds were the economy, specifically health and education. The public see the track record on both as negative for the Conservatives, the experts said.

They said allegations of corruption and sex scandals had severely dented support for the Conservatives, and the effect had filtered through to perceptions of incompetence.

Part of the problem for the Conservatives was the difference between Prime Minister John Major and Tony Blair, leader of the opposition, the experts said.

## Denmark and allies brace for rights clash with China

GENEVA (AFP) — Denmark will fight to the last to muster maximum support for its draft resolution condemning human rights violations in China despite threats from Beijing, diplomats said here Wednesday.

The Danish delegation will present a draft resolution before the U.N. Human Rights Commission Thursday and the 53 member countries will vote on the text next Tuesday.

Denmark had been expected to present its resolution Wednesday, but diplomats said it was waiting until the last minute in the hope of winning as much support as possible.

"We are seeking to get as many co-sponsors as possible. There is no reason to present it today," one diplomat said. The deadline for proposing the resolution is 1600 GMT Thursday.

Denmark stepped in Saturday and announced it would put forward the motion critical of China after the European Union failed to agree on a joint position for the annual human rights debate. The EU has previously sponsored a critical resolution on China each year since the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing in 1989, but France this year blocked a common EU stance. Paris was supported by Germany, Italy, Spain and Greece, drawing fire for putting trade considerations first.

While enthusiastically praising France and its allies, China warned Tuesday that any country supporting the resolution would harm its relations with the Asian giant.

"Supporting this resolution will not be beneficial to any nation's ties with China," Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said.

## Japan PM wants probe over nuclear accident

TOKYO (R) — A furious Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto ordered a raid on operators of Japan's only nuclear fuel reprocessing plant Wednesday and promised a full probe into a cover-up of the country's worst nuclear accident.

"I am so angry I cannot utter a single word," a shaken Hashimoto told reporters. "We will get third-party consultants to conduct a full probe."

Hashimoto's remarks came after his government ordered Science and Technology Agency inspectors to raid Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC) offices. PNC is the sole public firm in charge of reprocessing nuclear fuel. PNC executives told a news conference late Tuesday that its officials falsified a formal report about a March 11 explosion at the Tokaimura Nuclear Complex, which exposed 37 workers to small

doses of radiation. The complex houses Japan's only nuclear fuel reprocessing plant, just 160 kilometres northeast of Tokyo. The explosion occurred at a bismuthisation plant inside the complex, designed to harden low-level nuclear waste by mixing it with asphalt for permanent storage in drums. No one was seriously harmed in the explosion or fallout but the government said it was Japan's worst nuclear accident.

PNC had come under severe criticism for tardiness in alerting local officials, lax fire-fighting plans and outdated equipment, but the latest revelation points to a cover-up.

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Some of his party colleagues and relatives are demanding an end to the ex-president's love affair with his fellow Jatiya party member.

The issue apparently forced a perplexed Ershad to go for a "do-or-die" decision that might devastate his political career, Jatiya leaders, who declined to be identified, told Reuters.

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Lieutenant-General Ershad, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1982, was deposed in an opposition-led people's uprising in

## Bangladesh's Ershad faces tough choice — love or politics

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's flamboyant former military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad, freed only three months ago from jail, is facing a tough choice between his political career and his lover of 14 years, party sources said on Wednesday.

Ershad, who writes poems and used to play golf when in military service and in the presidency, perhaps played the wrong stroke when he celebrated his birthday last month in privacy with his fiancée, Zinat Hossain, a member of parliament, instead of his wife.

Ershad did not invite his wife and Zinat did not bring her husband, sources in Ershad's Jatiya Party say. Newspapers have run a variety of stories on what happened at the party.

Even close associates in the Jatiya Party had openly objected to such gestures from the former army strongman while his wife of more than 40 years, Begum Roushan and also an legislator, briefly left Ershad to live with her sister.

Ershad, with help of some senior Jatiya leaders, persuaded Roushan back home but the rift widened and

some of his party colleagues and relatives are demanding an end to the ex-president's love affair with his fellow Jatiya party member.

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"My relationship with Zinat has been a 14-year affair. She has done a lot for me...I want to make a decision about her," Ershad told the Sangbad newspaper in an interview.

"My problem now is one lady (Zinat). I feel very weak at this. And I don't know how to overcome it," Ershad said.

"I have made my proposal to Zinat and am awaiting her reply," Ershad told Sangbad when asked if he had proposed to marry her.

Newspapers on Wednesday said Zinat, wife of a former Industry Secretary Mosharraf Hossain, had told Ershad he must divorce Roushan before they can wed.

Zinat and Roushan were not available for comments.

## Canada's a great place to live, as long as sex is not a priority — poll

OTTAWA (AFP) — Viewed from abroad, Canada looks like a great place to live, with a secure government and banking system and strong social services, but for sex it is a dud, according to a Global Poll.

The survey, conducted by Angus Reid for the Canadian government and published Monday, revealed that non-Canadians generally:

- regard Canada as tolerant of diversity;
- admire the Canadian healthcare system;
- admire the country's natural wonders;
- have confidence in the Canadian business community;
- believe Canadians are honest;
- find Canadians not very sexy.

However, the opinions, culled from polls in 20 different countries, show that Canadian sex appeal is very much in the eyes of the beholder.

While 87 per cent of Ukrainians and 76 per cent of Belgians and Germans thought Canadians were sexy, only 30 of Italians agreed.

Thirty-six per cent of French respondents found Canadians unsexy — the highest of any of the nations.

The Chinese shared the French low opinion: Only 27 per cent of Chinese and Hong Kong respondents said they thought Canadians were sexually attractive.

But 75 per cent of Japanese and 72 per cent of South Korean respondents felt Canadians definitely did have sex appeal. Even though they do not find Canadians very sexy, the French said Canada would be their first choice for home if they were forced to leave their mother country.

Canada was also first choice for Americans, Ukrainians and Australians, second choice for Mexicans (after the United States), Britons (after Australia), South Koreans (after Australia) and residents of China and Hong Kong (also after Australia).

## NASA may rerun shuttle's curtailed mission

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — The space shuttle Columbia had barely come to a halt Tuesday after its mission was cut short before NASA began considering sending it back to space to complete some unfinished business.

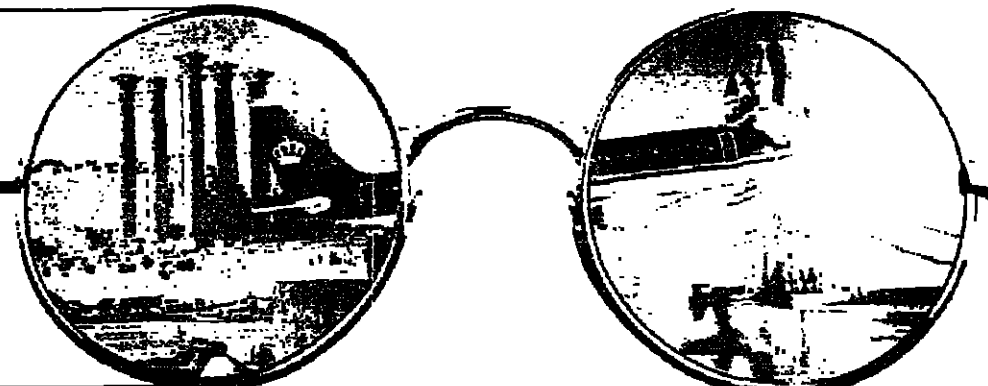
Space agency officials said the shuttle could be turned around in near-record time to rerun its mission, aborted because of a malfunctioning power generator. Columbia and its crew could be launched again as early as July 2. "We're going to try to give 'fall an oil change and send you back," Kennedy Space Centre director Roy Bridges joked with shuttle Commander Jim Halsell after Columbia's early homecoming. "We are evaluating the possibility of re-flying as early as the first part of July," shuttle programme director Tommy Holloway said. "I expect that evaluation will take the rest of this week."

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## Who should blink first?

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton appears poised to apply pressure on the Palestinian side to blink first in the showdown with Israel in his continued efforts to rescue the peace process from imminent collapse. Being the weaker party in the standoff, the onus is being transferred to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to salvage the process after the Clinton-Netanyahu talks in Washington last Monday failed to make a dent in Israel's wall of intransigent policies. As if admitting total inability to influence events in the Middle East, President Clinton said Tuesday that it was virtually up to the parties themselves to get the stalled negotiations started again. "I want these parties to do what they have to do to get this process up and going again," the president told reporters, while remaining upbeat that there is a "fairly decent chance" that the negotiations can be revived despite all the doom and gloom that surrounds them.

If it is the PNA that must make the first move, it is hard to imagine what the Palestinians can still do over and above all the concessions that they have already made in order to give peace a chance. It is one thing to have an atmosphere of zero-tolerance for violence as President Clinton has suggested and quite another to let Israel get away with "murder," every step of the way. President Clinton has talked about the need to promote the kind of confidence-building measures and policies to get the peace ball rolling once again, and we agree with him. But we all know that the ball is squarely in Israel's court, especially the inescapable decision to freeze settlement activity on occupied Palestinian land. At a time when Washington made it clear that constructing thousands of new housing units in East Jerusalem is a major obstacle to peace, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stormed out of his talks at the White House to announce to the whole world that construction will go on despite all the international protests. If this is not an affront to President Clinton and the entire world community we do not what is.

With each mounting casualty on the Palestinian side the risk of another all-out intifada becomes that much greater. When a Jewish settler armed with a machine gun shoots and kills an armed Palestinian in the heart of Hebron Tuesday, there can be no escape from the expectation that a renewed cycle of violence will soon follow. Five Palestinians have already been killed by Israeli soldiers in the last few days alone increasing the tension in the region to new heights.

Rather than apply pressure on the Palestinians who are being victimised every passing day, Washington should consider some arm-twisting against Netanyahu. The Americans know how the peace process got derailed and they know what it takes to put it back on track. Pinning hopes on further Palestinian concessions would be the very prescription for disaster.

As His Majesty King Hussein was quoted as saying yesterday, the Palestinians have done everything they could for peace. They have nothing left to give.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FAHED FANEK, a writer for Al Ra'i Wednesday criticised the government for volunteering to receive Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk who is currently detained in the U.S. Jordan had deported Abu Marzouk after accusing him of committing "inappropriate" activities; and the man, who holds a Yemeni passport, was detained in the U.S. after Israel had requested his extradition to put him on trial for alleged terrorist activities, the writer pointed out. But now that Israel has withdrawn its request, the American administration seems to be embarrassed and does not know what to do with him, especially because it is bound to be vindicated from any offence should he stand trial before American courts, the writer pointed out. He asked why should Jordan volunteer to save the U.S. or Israel from embarrassment and allow Abu Marzouk to be kept in detention or under house arrest in the Kingdom. He said the U.S. and Israel want to get rid of Abu Marzouk for fear of facing reprisals from Hamas if the man is extradited to Israel. The writer claimed that Jordan has more than one reason not to welcome back Abu Marzouk or give him sanctuary and should not volunteer to help save Israel or the U.S. from embarrassment of their own making.

A WRITER for Al Doustour charged that the Department of Statistics gives the public incorrect data about the actual unemployment situation in the Kingdom and is encouraged by certain government ministries to conceal the real figures. Mohammad Sbihi said by so doing the department is not deceiving itself and the public only, but it is also misleading the decision makers and planners and also potential investors who require to know accurate information about the national economy. By concealing the facts the department is misleading officials and thwarting efforts of government-appointed committees charged with carrying out reforms, he continued. Once the department has lost credibility in a certain case it is bound to lose credibility in other matters, and the information and data which it provides on other subjects will remain in doubt, according to the writer. We should realise that only by adopting sound principles and scientific methods can we help our country to develop, said the writer, who stressed the need for the department to seek accuracy and honesty in dealing with issues of concern to the nation.

## The View from Academia

# Mideast peace stalemate: is it bad news or good?

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

IT IS very difficult, even for peace advocates and optimists like myself, to think of Mideast peace these days without feeling pain in the neck, anger, disappointment, and even disillusionment. The coming to power of the present Israeli government did not, despite the little tiny bit of progress it insists on attributing to itself, bode well for the peace process.

So much valuable time has been wasted, so many hopes have been frustrated, so much confidence has been destroyed, so much life has been (and is being) lost. When Mideastern parties (less warmly than before) speak of commitment to peace these days, the words sound void, bland, and lip-service. What was so near and close sounds so distant and far-fetched. No matter how one looks at it, the Netanyahu government has made things extremely difficult for everyone. The impasse is quite real at this point.

I wonder though (especially if one forces one's self to look a little carefully and unemotionally beyond the surface) if there is not a level of hope (somewhat far-fetched and perverse though it may be) implied and suggested in the desperate situation we are all uncomfortably passing through and some good news implied and suggested by the very bad news which we are painfully experiencing.

Let's, first, state the obvious. Not long ago, as far back as only half a decade ago, peace between the Arabs and Israelis was almost unthinkable. Now, despite the obstacles and the stalemate, peace is thinkable. More importantly, some of it has actually materialised. Peace agreements have been signed and a noticeable level of peace relations between Arabs and Israelis (Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians, Qataris, Omanis, etc.) has come into being.

The "piece" (in the words of some cynics) of peace which we have seen so far has brought some understanding among the Arabs and Israelis. Up until Oslo (perhaps even up until the assassination of former Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin) many (most?) in the Arab World (with the obvious exception of Palestinians living in the occupied territories and a handful of intellectuals) knew very little about Israel.

Up until the time spoken of, Israel was one thing: an entity, occupationist in its practices, imperialist in its outlook, racist in its attitude, and never serious about peace. All Israelis are the same. You could never convince not only the man in the street (i.e. the carpenter, the housewife, the civil servant, the driver, etc.) but also many learned individuals that some (many?) Israelis are for peace, that they respect Arab rights including the Palestinian right to statehood, that they are against annexation of Palestinian and Arab land, that they are against violence, and that they want to live and let live. Hence our reference in our political discourse to Israel as the "Zionist entity" (one "entity," one mindset, that is).

By the same token, many Israelis doubted the sincerity of Arab countries and Arab people (especially the Palestinians) whenever they spoke of peace. The Arabs were seen by many Israelis as the enemy who wanted to throw Israel into the sea. There could be no true peace with the Arabs because the Arabs are "fickle" and "unreliable." There can be no independent Palestinian entity

(state or no state) on the land of Palestine because this will be a direct threat to the Israeli entity. And there can be no peace (not even talks) with the PLO.

Things have changed with respect to all of this. Israel has held talks with the PLO and has made peace with it. Israel no longer thinks the Palestinian state unthinkable, and many Israelis have faith in the sincerity of Arabs in pursuing peace. The Arabs are not fickle and unreliable. If anyone at present is fickle, unreliable, and elusive (toward peace, that is), it is the present Israeli prime minister.

With respect to the way the Arab side views Israel, one thing is obvious: Israel is not one thing. There are Israelis (in the eyes of the man in the street as well as the intellectuals) who want peace, who oppose terror, who respect Arab rights and sympathise with Arab suffering, and who are well-meaning and sincere in their wanting to live and let live. In other words, there are (as seen through the eyes of the Arab man in the street and as things appear to be in reality) two Israelis, not one: the Israel of the moderates (essentially the Labour Israel which is willing to make some sacrifices and some concessions for the sake of peace) and the Israel of the hardliners (the Israel of the Likud and the extremists which either is not serious about peace or desires peace its own way and for itself alone).

The fact that the Arabs (most Arabs) have come to see Israel as more than one thing is a great difference in my opinion, a difference which has been made as a result of peace.

More importantly, I believe that much of the Arab World has made peace with the first of the two Israelis. In other words, half of the peace process (so to speak) has materialised.

But what about the other half — peace with the extremist, hard-line Israel? Well, obviously, it has not happened yet. And this is what the present stalemate is essentially about or caused by. One is dealing with an Israel which is extremely one-sided in its view of things (it wants Jerusalem — all of Jerusalem — for itself, it wants peace and security for itself, it wants to "settle" wherever and whenever it sees fit, it wants to impose its top-sided vision and selfish, provocative schemes and have Arabs stay tongue-tied and arm-tied, etc.). This is bad news indeed.

Indirectly, however, the bad news may ultimately turn out to be good news. What do you mean?

Well, if one wants to establish lasting, durable, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, then peace has to be accepted by either all parties and peoples concerned or the vast majority of them. Right? In the Arab World, I would argue that peace has been accepted by the majority. The rejectionists are a minority, a small one at best. By contrast, peace (i.e. the kind of peace in the direction of which the Arab parties and the Labour Israel were heading) has not in reality been accepted by even a simple majority in Israel. The Israel which assassinated Rabin and brought Netanyahu to power is against peace the Labour style. It has its own peculiar (largely selfish) view of peace, if it wants peace at all. Netanyahu (whatever he is or is not deep down — a wolf in sheep's array or a lamb in wolf's array) is a perfect reflection, embodiment, epitome, and

image of this second Israel.

What I mean is that there can never be true, durable, lasting, and comprehensive peace until and unless one (i.e. Israel itself, the U.S., the Arabs, the Palestinians) come to terms with the wolfish Israel. Sooner or later (perhaps better sooner than later), the Likud Israel would have backfired. Now it has. So, what would you guys (i.e. Israel itself, the U.S., the Europeans, the Arabs, the Palestinians — the peace partners, that is) do about it? The true challenge now for all concerned is to think of ways to make the second Israel make peace.

My view is that it is better to tackle obstacles head on right from the very beginning than to pretend that there are no obstacles when in fact there are. In other words, the illness that prevents the peace process from proceeding in the right direction has been diagnosed, and now a remedy needs to be prescribed. We must get to study better, understand better, deconstruct better, and respond better to the logic (no matter how illogical), ideology (no matter how perverse), and vision (no matter how dark) which stand behind the extremist position in Israel. What is the peace-believing, peace-loving Israel itself going to prescribe to the malady which is growing in its body? What is the U.S. — the peace patron, partner, and honest broker — going to prescribe? What are the Arab peace partners going to prescribe?

This is one. The second thing is: Let the hard-line Israel air its views. Let it itself hear how ridiculous and dangerous its views (no matter how faithfully it clings unto them) sound to others and perhaps, ultimately, to itself. How do the peace-loving Israelis, the U.S. allies, the European world, the Arabs feel when they hear the Netanyahu Israel say: all of Jerusalem is for the Israelis (i.e. the Christians and the Muslims can go to hell); the Palestinians (unlike any other nation in today's civilised world) have to settle for a meaningless form of self-rule on a small piece of their land; Israel must have security even when its prime minister, police, and maniacal settlers are provoking, beating, and shooting Palestinians, etc.? It may be possible for the extreme Israel to realise the foolishness of its position from the reactions to them on part of other fellow Israelis, the Arab countries and the rest of the world.

What I am saying is that the good thing that is coming out of this bad situation is that the half of Israel which controls Israel now is exposing, embarrassing itself tremendously, though at a heavy price to all. What is more embarrassing than Netanyahu standing in front of AIPAC the other day calling for fighting terrorism? Surely, this is a joke. Who is provoking and causing terror in the Middle East now? My grandmother? Isn't it the Netanyahu Israel — the politicians who are endorsing and implementing provocative settlement plans, the settlers, the police?

Something good may come out of the Netanyahu government boring us to death with outdated arguments and provoking us to death with schemes of defiance and terror. From a bad situation, a good thing may ultimately emerge, and from a fall, a rise may be made possible.

# Helmut Kohl and the future of Europe

By Gwynne Dyer

FRESH FROM his annual two-week retreat at a fat farm in Austria, Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced on Thursday that he will run for a fifth term of office next year. Already the longest-serving leader of late 20th-century Europe, he could turn out to be the most important as well — if he wins his last gamble.

"In future the agenda is one of bloody conflict," commented the newspaper 'Saarbruecker Zeitung' after Kohl made his decision public on his 67th birthday. "Kohl's announcement has set off a marathon political election campaign."

It is 18 months until the next German election, but every decision made in Germany until then will be made in the shadow of that looming election. Because if Kohl wins, then 1999 will see the realisation of his grand project of European Monetary Union. The German mark, the French franc, and perhaps even the British pound will disappear, to be replaced by a one-size-fits-all 'euro'.

Even that does not fully convey the scale of what is at stake. European Monetary Union (EMU) is not some banker's brainchild; it is Kohl's strategy for embedding Germany irrevocably in a broader European society. Which is a matter of some urgency, given the fact that previous failures to integrate Germany into Europe caused two world wars and killed about 50 million Europeans in this century.

Many Germans resent Kohl's argument that something special must be done to lock Germany into Europe, because it seems to imply that there is something wrong with Germans — that it was the German national character, rather than the vagaries of history, that produced Hitler. Gerhard Schroeder, prime minister of the state of Lower Saxony and a potential opposition candidate for chancellor next year, gets particularly cross about it. "Kohl maintains the Germans have to be tied into Europe," Schroeder said recently. "I say the Germans are politically and democratically mature. They want to be Europeans because they want to, not because they must be to avoid being a danger to others."

If Kohl wins in 1998, then one way or another the EMU will probably happen in 1999. And if not, then not. So what are his chances of winning an unprecedented fifth term in office?

Rotten, by normal political standards. Kohl has been in power for 15 unbroken years, which is long enough to get on everybody's nerves. Moreover, the German economy is in trouble. Unemployment, at 12 per cent, is the highest Germans have experienced since before Hitler rose to power in 1933. Economic growth last year was a mere 1.4 per cent.

Kohl's government seems helpless before these problems. Much touted plans for tax reform and the revision of the national pension system were abandoned within days of being brought into the legislature in February. There is open dissension in the cabinet. Worst of all, two out of three Germans are against the EMU, fearing that the 'euro' will be a weaker currency than the cherished mark.

Kohl should be doomed — and indeed, the opinion polls consistently put the Social Democratic (SPD) opposition slightly ahead of the ruling coalition. But that is now, when opinions have no consequences. Eighteen months from now, it could be different.

During the 15 years Kohl has been chancellor, the SPD has been five different leaders come and go. It may well tear itself apart again before the election, because Gerhard Schroeder is mounting a strong challenge to current leader Oskar Lafontaine.

A lot of Germans just trust Kohl. He speaks no language but German, he has no intellectual pretensions, he always seems a bit uncomfortable abroad. He is fat, a bit pompous, boringly stable in his private life. He wins because he doesn't scare people.

## LETTERS

### Sad state of affairs

To the Editor:

WHEN RANDA Habib writes about the avoidance of vehicle tax by the rich, surely this is just the tip of the iceberg. Power, privilege and wealth mean everything in our country. How many times in the cocktail bars of Amman and Aqaba do we hear certain well-known names loudly exclaiming that they can do anything, say anything and are above the law of the land. They have connections in all of the right places.

One billion dinars in lost car excise is just a tiny percentage of real figure stolen from the nation's coffers by the powerful and privileged who should surely know better. A truly sad state of affairs.

Arafah Al Ashi,  
P.O. Box 347,  
Aqaba.

### Outdated information

To the Editor:

I HAVE pleasure to inform you that I read your newspaper regularly, and I really consider it as top-quality political daily. Besides, my friends and colleagues often talk about the professionalism with which your newspaper is credited.

Having that in mind, I was really astonished when I read in the 'Jordan Times' on April 7th an article headlined "Humour and desperation drive Belgrade protest" by Caroline Smith of Reuters.

I almost started to laugh since that article was completely outdated. Of course, I have no intention to write about how biased and slanted Caroline Smith's article was (it is well-known and, in today's world, one should learn to live with such media-bombardments by some Western and other news sources).

But, I have to note shortly that there are no protests, no demonstrations, no strikes in my country at least for four or five weeks now. Students' protests have passed as minor event for us. Mr. Velickovic is no more Dean of Belgrade University for almost four weeks now etc.

It seems to me that you printed the article which was old at least one month and a half. As I said, completely outdated article. Having in mind the excellent reputation of your daily, it is hard to believe that publishing such an article is good for you.

Nevertheless I am going to stay a permanent reader of your daily, since it is rather good. I would like you not to understand this letter as a complaint, but as a friendly remark.

Oliver Potezica  
Charge d'Affaires of the  
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia  
in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Editor's note: We agree with Mr. Potezica that the said article was outdated and was unnecessarily kept in our computer files for a long time. We therefore regret any inconvenience caused by the printing of the article.



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# Weekender

Jordan Times, Thursday, April 10, 1997

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## Society on the Move

### Of polls, parliaments and parties

Not long on the newstands, Al Mithaq has published the results of its self-styled public opinion poll in which its reporters questioned (many by telephone) citizens in the country's cities asking them two questions: Who would you like to see as prime minister (among a give list of names which omitted current Premier Abdul Salam Majali "to avoid confusion"), and what three qualifications would you want from a prime minister? First, the answers. A total 32.9 per cent of those who responded said they would like to see Jordan Engineers Association President Leith Shubeilat as premier. The also-ran list is as follows: 21.4 per cent for former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat, 12.3 per cent for former Prime Minister Taher Masri, 8.7 for Deputy Toujan Faisal, 4.4 per cent for Abdul Karim Kabariti, 3.6 per cent for Abdullah Ensour, 2.2 for HRH Prince Zeid Bin Shaker, 2.1 per cent for Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, 1.6 per cent for Abdullah Akaileh, 1.5 per cent for Saad Hayel Srou, 1.4 per cent for Suleiman Arar, 1.3 per cent for Zeid Rifai, 1.3 per cent for Ahmad Lawzi, 1.1 per cent for Mudar Badran, and 4.2 per cent for others. Of the three qualifications or accomplishments they would seek in a prime minister in order of priority, the respondents said: in domestic affairs — combating corruption, respecting citizens feelings, improving the economy, enhancing democracy, abolishing the practice of wastia, decentralisation of the government, and engaging in field work; in external affairs — enhancing inter-Arab relations especially with Iraq, diplomatic expertise and tactfulness, resolving the Palestine question, freezing normalisation with Israel; personal qualifications — cleanliness, truth, power, high qualifications, religious tendency, modesty and bravery.

According to the paper, the six journalists who conducted this survey faced obstacles far greater than expected. Nearly 40 per cent of the 1,000 people who were called "refused to cooperate with the team because they were indifferent or afraid to do so." Al Mithaq said that this was a dangerous indicator proving once again the need for the largest sector of the public to be involved in political and democratic activity. Other characteristics of the sample were reported to be that 29 per cent had tawjihi level education, 14 per cent community college, 33 per cent an undergraduate university degree, 4 per cent postgraduate degrees and 20 per cent with no academic qualifications. A total of 45 per cent of the sample were 18-25 years old, 27 per cent 26-33, 11 per cent 34-41, five per cent 42-48, six per cent 49-53, and six per cent were 53-years-old and above. The sample included 64.6 per cent men and 35.4 women.

their requests to the government to host the event in public facilities such as the Professional Association Complex or hotels were turned down. But neither that nor the unseasonably cold temperatures stopped the large turnout at Dr. Haddadin's office. The JBASP, which was officially established as a political party in Jordan in early 1995, awarded, posthumously, about 60 individuals who were pioneers in the early days of the party. The one person to be awarded who is the oldest living member of the party was Amin Shukair, who attended that first Damascus summit 50 years ago. According to Mr. Mdanat, the JBASP claims more than 1,500 members, which makes it the second largest political party in Jordan after the Islamic Action Front. The party is considering a list of candidates for the next general elections which could include Dr. Hosni Shiyab of Irbid, Yousef Nimri of Husn, and Kamal Fakhouri of Salt. There is little doubt that the party will once again field its one elected deputy, Dr. Haddadin of Amman's Third District, but in Karak, names are still being floated and it could turn out that two JBASP candidates are fielded.

**AHEAD OF FREEDOM DAY:** Two senior South African foreign affairs officials were in Jordan last week after attending a meeting in Bahrain of all the heads of the republics' missions, which was attended by Ambassador to Jordan Henry De Bruyn. Malcolm Ferguson, chief director-Middle East for the Department of Foreign Affairs, and John Sundé, director-Middle East/Levant, took advantage of being in the region to extend their travels to Jordan and the West Bank. Time permitting, they also hoped to meet with officials in Tel Aviv. While in Jordan, the diplomats met with former Minister of Information and former Ambassador to Israel Marwan Muasher, Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki, Amman Chamber of Industry President Khalid Abu Hassan, Arab Bank Chairman Khaled Shoman, Royal Scientific Society Acting President Said Alloushi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General Ibrahim Naghawi, Colonel Omar Khalidi of the Special Forces (for first stage familiarisation), sociologist Sari Nasser, and former Director of the Royal Cultural Centre Iyad Qattan. Mr. Ferguson served twice in his country's mission to Israel, first as a junior officer, then as ambassador in his last foreign posting from 1990 through 1993. He returned to Pretoria to head the Middle East section. Mr. Sundé was high commissioner of South Africa's mission in Port Louis, Mauritius.

**PRESIDENTIAL ATTENDANCE:** The Arab World and Europe was the more focused objective of another international meeting. Amman Private University President Amin Mahmoud and Hashimiyeh University President Mohammad Hamdan were in the Gulf where they attended a meeting of the Arab European Cooperation Conference in Dubai. The conference was co-hosted by the Union of Specialised Arab Institutions, the Arab League, the European Union and the Coalition of Parliaments for Euro-Arab Cooperation. The tall-order aim of the conference is to identify valuable and viable areas of cooperation between the Arab World and Europe.

**CHURCH MATTERS:** The Christian community in Jordan made the news twice this week. First Roman Catholic (Latin) Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah was in Baghdad to attend the opening of a home for senior citizens. While he was there, the patriarch joined Patriarch of Iraq Rafai Bedawed and other members of the Iraqi Catholic community and paid a courtesy visit to Uday Hussein, the son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The younger Hussein is recuperating from wounds sustained in an assassination attempt last December. The other news makers are the newly elected administrative council of the Roman Catholic Charity. They are George Yousef Najjar as chairman, Michel Mitri Saliba as vice chairman, George Anis Abu Zeid as treasurer, Nabil George Shaaban as secretary, and Marianne Nad Makdah, George Eli Khoury, Suhail Tawfiq Marrar and Nadim Hanna Garghour as members. Alternate council members are Ibrahim Hattar, Hani Makdah and Souad Nader Salhouh.

**SEEKING A SAFE HAVEN:** One of the Jordan Environment Society's (JES) 20 branches in the Kingdom held elections for a new administrative committee which will hold the fort for the next two years. The Fuhais branch, whose biggest concern can safely be said to be various sources of pollution from the Jordan Cement Factories Company, re-elected medical doctor Fakhr Smayrat as president, and elected Jamal Hattar, an engineer, as vice president, Elaine Smayrat, a professional secretary, as secretary, and Muwaffaq Sami Ziadat, also an engineer, as treasurer. Other members elected to the committee were Kamal Maddaen, Tariq Manayzel and Ziad Adeeb Sweiss. The JES, established in 1988, has 4,000 members, six commissions, and 73 organisations. Although a good portion of the JES's efforts are targeted at public awareness, Dr.



The Danish royal couple Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik, and their sons Crown Prince Frederik (right) and Prince Joachim (photo by Klaus Moller)

Smayrat sees the role of branches as extending further into the communities to work towards solutions to environmental problems. He says the JES branch has suggestions for immediate and long-term solutions to these problems that would be acceptable to all concerned. Thus, that is the objective of the new administrative committee and the members of the Fuhais branch over the next two years. "Our concern is to live in a safe environment, not shut down the factory," Dr. Smayrat said.

**A MAN OF WORDS:** The U.S.-based Oriental Culture Society came to Amman to present renowned writer and intellectual Rox Bin Zaid Al-Uzici the Nakhleh Badr Award for literary excellence. The honours were bestowed on Mr. Al-Uzici of Madaba by the society's chairman Badr Nakhleh at the Marriott Hotel. Since the award was first presented in 1994, 14 Arab writers have been recipients. The awards ceremonies have always taken place in the U.S., but for Mr. Al-Uzici, who is in his 80s, the society came to Jordan. Future awards from the society are planned, including scholarships to excellent students who want to pursue their education in journalism in the U.S. The society also plans to publish Arabic literature.

**OFF TO SEE THE QUEEN:** A delegation of journalists from the country's major local papers and Jordan Television are in Denmark at the invitation of the Danish government to meet Queen Margrethe II and senior officials in advance of the visit to Copenhagen of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor scheduled for later this month. On the press team are Al-Awsay Editor-in-Chief Mustafa Abu Libdeh, Jordan News Agency, Petra, editor Tariq Khoury, Al-Dustour reporter Nayef Muheisen, Jordan Television reporter Paul Hijazin, Al-Rai reporter Majed Jabara and Jordan Times editor Leif Wulfbelt.

**AN HONEST DAY'S WORK:** Hashem Lutfi, a driver for the Maun Government Hospital was honoured by Public Security Department Chief Nassouh Moheiddin for his exemplary honesty and dedication to his profession. Mr. Lutfi was called to the scene of a fatal car collision near the Wadi Musa triangle to rush a victim to the hospital. Tragically the victim died before arriving at the facility. A large sum of Saudi currency, which Mr. Lutfi found on the victim's person, was handed over to hospital administrators who took care of giving it over to the victim's family. Occurrences of misplaced wallets often containing large amounts of cash and important documents are commonplace in Jordan's travel industry, as in any country, and drivers and flight attendants are usually the ones to discover them and return them to their owners or to the appropriate

authorities.

**CHAIN, CHAIN, CHAIN... CHAIN OF FOODS:** Picking up on the American food court concept, some entrepreneurs are opening just that sort of multi-culinary establishment in Abdoun Circle. The facility will operate on two floors: first will be a self-service and patio facility with seating for up to 200, and second floor will be full service with the same menus. We can tell you that the court plans to have Blimpie, Dunkin' Donuts, Everything Yogurt, Gretel's Pretzels, and Bananas Ultimate Juice Bar. Opening is planned soon, say the managers. And, a recent advertisement published in English in Al-Rai Arabic daily announcing job vacancies at Ma Ali's new pastry chain Planet Donuts applies to the two existing establishments in Sweifiyeh and Abdoun. But, business must be doing rather well because proprietor Ibrahim Ma Ali says the food establishment is searching for yet a third location for their Planet Donuts.

**ON THE ROAD AGAIN:** Jordanian cyclist Ali Hassan Etom will be off and pedalling again now that he has obtained another visitor's visa to the United States. Mr. Etom, has cycled through 28 countries in Europe and the Middle East. He was in the U.S. once before in 1993 and even met His Majesty King Hussein there while the King was on a visit. Mr. Etom's plan is to tell people about Jordan and hand out literature about the Kingdom. Happy trails to you.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Not long after the J.T. heard from HRH Crown Prince Hassan's Press Secretary Abdul Salam Turawneh in a letter to the editor stating that he was most definitely not running for Parliament as we quoted Al Mithaq as reporting, new Al Arab Al Yom Editor in Chief Tareq Masarweh wrote to Al Mithaq directly denying his intention to place his name on the polls as well. Mr. Masarweh said: "I have read in your paper's second issue that I will run for parliament elections in Madaba Governorate which is a news I have never heard of. Madaba is my home town where my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and Kamal Masarweh are laid, but I live in Sweifiyeh, Kamalieh area and I will vote for my friend Faris Nabulsi. I do not think of Madaba as a farm or a country estate which I return to during parliamentary elections, but Madaba has its own candidates who are more eligible and qualified than me. And I don't think that it is good for me to run for election without being asked to do so by at least someone."

Jennifer Hamarneh

## 'Patriotic' computer games hope to win over China's youth

By H. Asher Bolande  
Agence France Presse

**BEIJING** — A Chinese software maker will begin releasing educational computer games with "patriotic" themes next month, hoping to break the stranglehold of foreign games on the country's youth.

Unlike foreign-made games — which take up 91 per cent of the Chinese market — the CD-ROM titles under development at Qinghua University's Opti-

cal Memory National Engineering Research Centre aim to teach young people about their history while they play, said the centre's deputy director, Lu Da.

The first, "Opium War," allows players to re-live the 1840-42 conflict that eventually forced China to cede Hong Kong to Britain.

Scheduled for release next month, it features the slick video, action and musical accompaniment one might expect from Western or Japanese counterparts.

Three-dimensional war maps — complete with British warships bombarding fortified Chinese ports — epic movie-battle footage and colourful scenes within Beijing's Imperial Palace take the computer screen in turns.

The player, as a Qing-dynasty official, must petition the emperor for funds, commission warships and soldiers, recruit generals and deploy them in hopes of staving off the European onslaught.

Guiding journalists through a naval battle scene where numerous Chinese war junks end up in flames, games department manager Yang Nanzheng admitted that the game's emphasis on historical realism makes it something of a challenge.

"It's possible to win, but very, very difficult," he said. "That's the way history was, so that's the way we tried to do it."

Working in the centre's labs is a mix of software engineers, graphic artists

and students, Lu said.

One woman could be seen using a mouse to "paint" the finishing touches onto computerised architectural scenery and Chinese costumed figures to appear in "Opium War."

The imminence of Hong Kong's July 1 return to Chinese sovereignty gave the game some impetus, he said, but it is also part of a philosophical shift in the centre's software development.

Its first CD-ROM game,

"Magic Eagle," an airplane combat game, was a hit when released in 1994, but many students and young people asked why a Chinese company would make such a game with such a foreign name and style, he said.

"So then we began to think about creating games with more consciousness of the (historical) background, so as to support education," he said.

Other titles scheduled for release later in the year include a game about the

Communist troops' historic 1934-36 Long March, during China's civil war.

"August 1 Fighting Eagle" looks at the 1950-53 Korean War through the eyes of pilots in a famous Chinese jet-fighter squadron whose members battled with U.S. aircraft.

All three games — targeted at ages 13 and up — will sell for around 100 yuan (\$12), because any higher price would simply cause sales to be decimated by cheap illegal copies, Lu

said.

"Many of our past titles have been hit by piracy," he said, waving a hand towards a poster advertising interactive educational, reference and travel software the centre also produces.

Profits from software sales, which are handled by an affiliated company, are pumped back into the centre to promote further software development, he said.

## The Internet saga

By Jean-Claude Elias

THIS IS NOT the first Chip Talk on Internet and something's telling me that it's not the last. Indeed, rarely a topic of information technology and personal computers has received so much coverage in the media or has caught the interest of PC users worldwide to such an extent.

For those who are alien to planet Earth: Internet, also called the Web or World Wide Web (WWW), is a network of computers, covering the world. Any computer fitted with a small electronic device called modem and connected to a regular telephone line can access the Web, provided the user has taken a subscription to it, of course.

Once connected what can you do? First you can use the electronic mail system that lets you send and receive messages or computer files through your own electronic "P.O. Box" — each person is assigned a user name in a format that looks like: "jeanclaud@nets.com.jo" for example. To send an E-mail message to an electronic address you do not even have to know where in the world it is located, you just add the word "Internet" to the address and the Web takes care of the rest. E-mail is fast, practically instant, reliable, easy to use and inexpensive.

However, E-mail is but a subset of the Web. What computer lovers are enjoying more than anything else is to browse through the Internet Sites, or to surf on the Web as it is trendy to say. A Web Site is a virtual place on Internet where one can find information of any kind. Many companies, corporations, universities, major publications and large organisations now have their site. They put at your fingertips an enormous amount of information that is presented in an attractive, colourful way and that is constantly updated. Information you find in a site can be linked to other sites via a technique called hypertext. Say you are exploring the site of "Raindrop University," by clicking with the mouse on the word "chemistry" that you are reading, the system will take you to other sites who also display such a word. Naturally the search through such a vast network can become complex. Companies like "Yahoo" are providing users with powerful, practical software tools to help them explore the Web in a friendly manner and also to reach sites without even knowing their address, by

### chip talk



knowing only the topic they are interested in.

Information you get from the Web is not only made of text, still images and colours. Provided your PC is fitted with the right software and hardware options, you can enjoy on-line music and video too.

Another attractive feature of the WWW is the possibility we have to update data available to us on CD-ROMs. Consider Microsoft Cinemania for instance, the encyclopedia of the moviegoer. Even by acquiring the yearly edition of the CD you may need updates on a more frequent basis, which you can do over the Internet, precisely. There is even an automatic function in the CD itself that launches the Internet connection, goes directly to Cinemania Web site automatically and lets you browse information that is updated every month. What more can one ask for.

Not everything on the Web is perfect. A very interesting note from the editor Cinemania reads: "The Internet is an enormous and rather daunting morass of information, but much of it is unverified and untrustworthy." I can't but agree. But it's like real life, one must be able to pick up what's good only. It's a whole educational process this generation of PC users has to go through.

Currently, one hour of Web surfing in Jordan costs an average of four dinars and the transmission speed of modems isn't very fast. All users are waiting for better days, hoping that rates will drop and communication speeds will increase. The Internet may then become available in every office and every home. Stay tuned.

## Confronting the facts...

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

IT HAS FINALLY been proved: Bad news can damage your health. According to a recent scientific study into the effects of TV news reports and newspaper coverage, gloomy news can be bad for your emotional health.

The survey confirms that broadcasts of reports of famine, violence, poverty, and crime leave viewers and readers considerably more depressed than do the happier stories of winners and miracles.

But what kind of story is ours? To start with, we have to graciously thank the Mayor of Amman for coming out in public confirming what we had all long since known: Drug dealing goes on at Abdoun's circle, and right under the watchful eye of many people.

His honesty is most welcome at a time when evading the truth and being dishonest is the way many people have chosen.

Now, we can either ignore his revelations, just like many of our writers, analysts, columnist, social workers, and politicians have irresponsibly done, and that at their own peril, or we too can speak out forcefully about this whole affair and demand that something be done about it. And while we're at it, we can also wonder whether giving out speeding tickets to drivers driving in Abdoun at 60 rather than 55 km/h is more important than controlling the distribution of banned substances in that same area. Is it?

Reality confirms that this is just one typical case of how our priorities are all messed up. They are truly messed up when we begin to believe that a city like



Amman needs an Arab Disney located near it at a time when everything inside and outside Amman already feels like a part of Disney World: The mess, the anarchy, the diversity, the lying, the cheating, the wealth, the poverty, the misery, the fairy tales, the restaurants, the deceit, the chauvinism, etc...

Again, we may not even need a Hard Rock Cafe, nor a Planet Hollywood, but if they can bring us closer to the West in which some people amongst us think they already live, aided by discarding every single Jordanian ethic, custom, and tradition, then by all means, let us welcome them into our midst.

For once money is to be made out of such places — and straight into already full pockets — by catering for tourists, most hypocrites will argue that there can be no harm in having them. Even in quiet residential areas that were supposed to have been exclusively residential.

Again, why would anyone contemplate that Jordan would need to build a bullet train service to link Amman with Beirut and Jeddah, at a time when it remains an arduous task to travel from one part to another inside Jordan itself.

Shouldn't this be sorted out first? At the end of the day, and given our present predicaments, shouldn't we be catering for the needs of every single one of us rather than for the needs of tourists and

the rich? Reality dictates that we deal with those people in our country who have come to believe that they do not actually live here, but have done so well to create their own imaginary world in and around Western Amman.

We want to talk about those people, and the others whose officially sanctioned smuggling in the Jordanian deserts is tantamount to blackmail and holding the entire country's development and resources to ransom.

If there are scores to be settled, then this should be done promptly so that the rest of us can get on with our lives. Lesson number one being that before we even attempt to look towards what is on the outside, we should rather be busy fixing what is wrong on the inside.

To sum up, in a most polite manner, our priorities seem to be terribly screwed up to say the least. Our thinking seems to be terribly focused on what we would like to have rather than on what we need to have. The way forward is to realise that we cannot continue to placate those people who stubbornly use their privileges to further their own interests. This is a problem that we ourselves have to take care of. Nobody else is going to do it for us. And this is why we should not expect others to help us when we are not willing to help ourselves. For in all honesty, we have thus far only managed to chicken out every-time things got rough.

This is the right time for change. And if our elders cannot sincerely face up to the truth about their time, can the younger generation be blamed for walking away from it all?

## JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

### Thursday, April 10, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Ovide & The Gang (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Raw Toonage (Cartoon)
- 2:45 Curiosity Show
- 3:10 They Came From Outer Space
- 4:00 N.B.A. Basketball
- 5:00 Out Of This World
- 5:30 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Parenthood
- 8:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
- 8:30 The American Chart Show
- 9:10 Kung Fu — The Legend Continues
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature Film
- In The Line Of Duty — Smoke Jumpers
- Starring: Adam Baldwin & Lindsay Frost
- 12:00 Taratata

### Friday, April 11, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 The Mask (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Flintstones (Cartoon)
- 3:00 See How They Grow
- 4:00 The Winners
- 5:00 Science Encyclopedia
- 5:30 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 America's Funniest Home Videos
- 8:00 The Health Show
- 8:30 HawkEye
- 9:10 Frontline (Doc.)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature Film
- Stark-Mirror Image
- Starring: Nicolas Surovy & Kirstie Alley

### Saturday, April 12, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Adventures Of Mickey & Donald
- 2:30 Moomin (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Gillette (Sports)
- 4:30 Innovations (Doc.)
- 5:00 Tilt 23.5
- 5:15 Blue Heelers
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Hanging with Mr. Cooper (Comedy)
- 8:00 Magazine Zero One
- 8:30 Prism (Local Talk Show)
- 9:10 Time Trax (Science Fiction)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 MacGyver
- 11:15 Feature Film
- Cast A Deadly Spell
- Starring: Fred Ward & Juliane Moore

### Sunday, April 13, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Jonny Quest (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Problem Child (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 The Global Family (Doc.)
- 4:25 Energy Express (Programmes For Children)
- 4:50 Our World, Their World (Doc.)
- 5:15 Clear Water-Big Fish
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air (Comedy)
- 8:00 World Echo (Doc.)
- 8:30 Side Effects (Medical Drama)
- 9:10 New Doc. (Nautilus)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Hot Shots
- 11:15 Sisters

### Monday, April 14, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Captain Planet (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Flintstones (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Nature's Inventions (Doc.)
- 4:25 Deep Water Haven
- 4:50 Ocean Girl
- 5:20 Extra Dimensions (Doc.)
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 One Foot In The Grave (Comedy)
- 8:00 Secrets Of Science (Doc.)
- 8:30 Murder She Wrote
- 9:10 Highlander
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Under Suspicion
- 11:15 Middle March

### Tuesday, April 15, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Budgie (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Grimmy (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Super Sport Follies
- 4:30 Dog House (Children Drama)
- 5:00 Preserving For The Taste Of It (Doc.)
- 5:15 The Album Show
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 The Office (Comedy)
- 8:00 Tilt
- 8:30 Encounter (Local Talk Show)
- 9:10 Nature of Things
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Snowy River
- 11:15 Mission Impossible

### Wednesday, April 16, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Flintstones
- 2:30 Adventures On Rainbow Pond
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 America's Funniest People
- 4:25 Escape From Jupiter
- 4:50 Challenge (Doc.)
- 5:15 Bordertown
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Grace Under Fire (Doc.)
- 8:00 Soldier's Diary
- 8:30 Challenges (Local Talk Show)
- 9:10 Spencer For Hire
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Cobra
- 11:15 Hart To Hart

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shuqair

### STRANGE BELIEFS

• THE MOMENT a person begins to yawn, he/she puts his/her hand in front of his/her mouth to prevent the devil from coming into his/her mouth.

If he/she was given the chance to make a sign of the Cross three times before yawning, it would be unnecessary to close the mouth as the Cross sign is considered to be the best closure against the devil.

• HE WHO wants to kill lust, he ought to carry a heart of a turtle-dove in a bag made of a wolf's skin.

If a turtle-dove's leg has been hung on a tree, the tree would give no fruit.

In case the turtle-dove's eggs have been mixed with that of the hen's, the hen's eggs would produce cocks provided that the hen should lay on all of these eggs.

• SHOULD a lover, on St. John's night, stretch under the elm-tree and listen to the nightingale's chant, he comes to believe that his love would be rewarded.

### LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

\*\* I should like to buy a good watch of moderate price. Awad an ashtaree sa'atan jayyedah besi' ren mu'taddle.

\*\* I'd like it water-proof, dust-proof, shock-proof and anti-magnetic. Ofaddil an takoon maane'a lil-maa, wal-ghubar, was-sadamat, wal-mighantissiyah.

\*\* Is it guaranteed? Hal heya madmoonah?

\*\* I warrant it for two years. Admanoha sanatayn.

\*\* How much is it? Kam qeematoha?

\*\* Twenty Jordanian dinars. Ishroon dinaran ordoniyah.

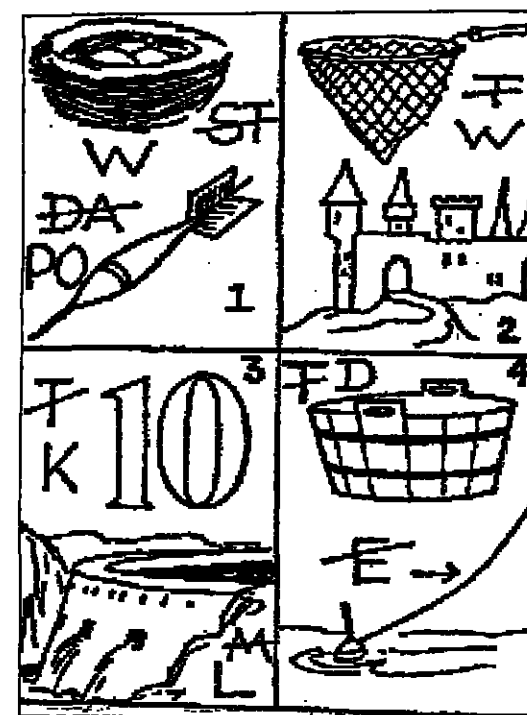
\*\* It's very expensive. Innaha ghaliyah jiddan.

\*\* By the way, I wish to have my old watch repaired. Bil-munasabah, innani arghab islah sa'a'il qadeemah.

\*\* The main spring is broken. Az-zunbarak ar-ra'eesi maksoor.

\*\* If you call again after three days, you'll find it ready. Iza hadart marratan thaniya ba'da thalathet ayyam, sawfa tajjidoha jahizza.

### (B) NAME THE TOWN

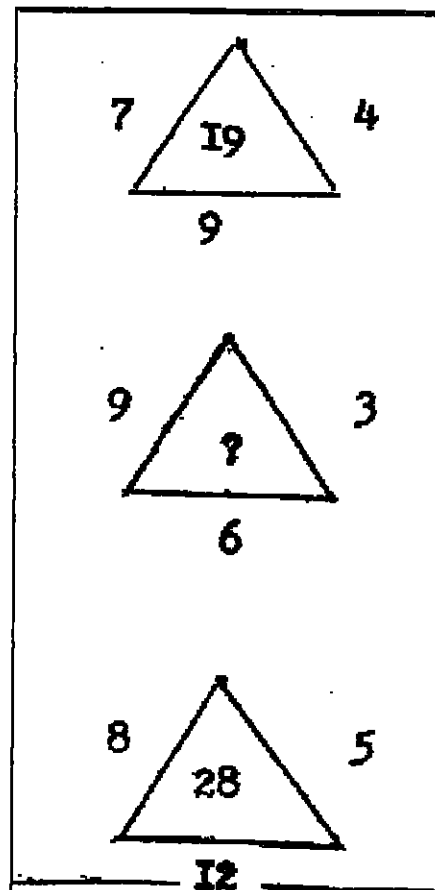


### BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What does each of these verbs mean? rack, reck, rick, rock, ruck.
2. What is tombola?
3. What is the difference between: teehee - teepee; lump - sump?
4. Give one word for:  
a) to absorb again b) to make bold c) a stack of coins rolled up in paper.
5. The liver of lobster which turns green when boiled is called.....what?

### PUZZLES

#### (A) INSERT THE MISSING NUMBER:



### JOKES

• "Why do you paint your car red on one side and blue on the other?"  
"Well, I may be exposed to an accident. Here the witnesses give contradicting reports. If suspicion arises, the traffic court will certainly acquit me!"

• A TOURIST went to a zoo. To his surprise, he caught sight of a bear standing beside a sheep.  
"What's that?" he asked.  
"That's an example of Peaceful Co-existence."  
"It's so wonderful, indeed!"  
"Of course, sir. We always keep a new sheep in the cage for this purpose."

• A GIRL stipulated that her fiancé should abstain from smoking, drinking coffee and coming back home at an early hour of the night.  
After a pause on the part of the fiancé, she said: "There's something else I'd like you to abandon."  
"Yes, I see. I've decided to reject marrying you once and for all!"

Puzzle answers on Weekender page D



## Country music rallies to challenge of alternative country, sales dip

By Jim Patterson  
The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tennessee — Something wonderful has happened to the country-music industry: Sales have slipped.

Record-company bean counters aren't happy, but music fans could end up big winners when they hear the exciting new music coming their way in 1997. Talent executives who've been playing it safe for years with young (and sometimes forgettable) clones of George Strait, Garth Brooks and Reba McEntire are taking some chances.

There are even signs that radio programmers, notorious for their conservatism, may be willing to give edgier, unique artists a chance.

"It seems like most of the labels are kind of looking for someone different," said Jim Lauderdale, a talented and veteran songwriter who is recording a new CD for RCA records.

"You know their token different acts," he said. "In the rocky event that one of them catches on,

they want to be there ready."

Lauderdale recorded Planet Of Love for reissue in 1991. It was an influential failure, with eight of its 10 songs subsequently recorded by others. A hard-country album he recorded for Sony was shelved, and a pop deal with Atlantic didn't work out either.

The industry verdict: Lauderdale was too left-of-center. He moved to minor-league upstart records for "persimmons" last year. That album was embraced in the alternative country market, a niche of country-rock bands who are finding an audience without Nashville's help.

"I do think there's a really strong, solid dislike for most of the mainstream stuff coming out of Nashville these days," said Peter Blackstock, editor of No Depression magazine, which covers alternative country music.

"Most of the acts that are on the top of the charts are not artists who most of our readership considers very creative musically."

Of course, millions of mainstream country fans disagree. Country music quadrupled its

sales from 1988-95, in the wake of Garth Brooks' rise to superstar. But sales slipped by 10 per cent to 12 per cent in 1996, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.

That's enough of a dip for executives such as Joe Galante at RCA Nashville to take stock. Galante is betting on break-the-mold artists like Lauderdale, Sara Evans, Ray Vega, and the reinvigorated Kentucky Headhunters to spark some enthusiasm in listeners, and maybe even win over some of those No Depression readers.

"I think we have become so focused on the song and not on the singer that we forget that anybody can sing the song but not everybody is a star," Galante said.

"We have gotten in a situation where we can have a song and it can sell a bunch of records and then we mistake that for being a star and this format only grows when it has lots of bright stars."

"If Reba McEntire gets up on stage she can sing for 42 days. Alabama can do the same thing. ... Then you come across other people and

you go Billy Ray Cyrus, Achy Breaky Heart and that's it. He has done well in this business, but standing the test of time is what we're supposed to be paid for."

Country music deejays were cautiously supportive of alternative country at a recent Nashville convention. If they follow through, any of the RCA acts could break through in 1997. Other labels are also trying to launch unique artists on the airwaves, such as gritty singers Jack Ingram (Rising Tide), Bob Woodruff (Imprint), and Neal Coty (Mercury). Any of the three could become the John Mellencamp of country music if they start scoring hits.

The group big house (MCA) puts an insistent R and B backbeat on most of its songs, and has flirted with the label "Funky." Sara Evans, a former prodigy from Missouri, has a stunning debut ready, Three Chords And The Truth, heavily influenced by Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn, will be released in May.

The Kentucky Headhunters are trying now to

get airplay for their rocking remake of Marty Robbins' "Singing The Blues." Ray Vega has had a fine CD in the dramatic Roy Orbison-Gene Pitney tradition out since last year, but has yet to score a hit.

Kim Richey, who co-wrote the Trisha Yearwood hit Believe Me Baby (I Lied) has just released a great second CD out on Mercury. Lauderdale promises a Bakersfield-Buck Owens sound for his upcoming RCA CD.

Will any of them break through and make country music interesting again?

"Whoever would have predicted 20 years ago that country music would be as huge as it is now?" Lauderdale said. "Who would've predicted that there would be country bands that would be huge?"

"And then who would have predicted a few years ago that women in country music would've taken off, because in the past ... they were at the bottom of the totem pole and now they're kind of leading the pack."

"We'll just have to see."

## Censors accused of cashing in on video piracy

By Stephen Mwangi  
in Nairobi and  
Robert Otani in Kisumu

THE KENYAN government has been urged to take tougher action to tackle video piracy, which is said to be destroying the country's film industry and cheating legitimate businesses.

The Information Ministry has been accused of turning a blind eye to video-cassette bootlegging as it boosts its own revenues through the sale of censorship permits.

Critics of government inaction include a Kenyan cinema executive, Anil Kapila, while the United States embassy and a South African-owned Nairobi-based television channel have expressed alarm at the scale of the piracy.

The Multi-Choice channel has warned the rapidly-growing number of video libraries: "It's illegal to offer for borrowing any cassettes dubbed from our channel. From now on, we'll take legal action against any library doing this."

The Information Ministry maintains that it reminds video libraries that they must not deal in pirated material and must offer only cassettes cleared by the ministry's censorship board, for which a fee is charged.

Under-Secretary James Ndegwa says the ministry collects 1.4 million Kenya shillings a week from 25,000 cassettes in Nairobi alone. He says the aim is to protect Kenyans from immoral and excessively-violent films. "Our action is in the best interests of the general public and it deserves their support."

But some critics accuse the min-

istry of being more interested in earning revenue — from selling the censorship-clearance stickers that are attached to videos — than in halting bootlegging.

A Nairobi lawyer, Stephen Mwenesi, says: "By allowing censorship stickers on products known to have been acquired illegally, the government could be seen to be condoning violation of the copyright law and the other conventions to which Kenya is a signatory."

Cinema chief Kapila, general manager for Fox Theatres, agrees. He says the ministry is only concerned with making money through selling stickers, "even when the action clearly encourages acts of copyright violation."

Anyone seeking censorship clearance, he says, should first show a certificate proving the cassettes are genuine.

Production companies recoup their costs by screening their films in cinemas and then, three to six months later, releasing the film on video, says Kapila. "Today, however, it has become common to see pirated copies within a couple of weeks of newly-released movies from Hollywood."

"My corporation has protested to the Information Ministry and to the major film suppliers in London. Overseas film distributors have refused to offer home video rights in the Kenyan market until the

piracy issue is resolved."

Kapila believes that "some powerful individuals" in Kenya are involved in the business.

He estimates he lost \$150,000 revenue last year as a result of illicit videos, and points out that the government is losing large amounts of tax.

In addition, he says, the pirates are undermining the film industry. Producers wanting to make an African movie are reluctant to locate in Kenya, preferring countries such as South Africa, which respect copyright laws.

A 1995 U.S. report accused Kenya and three other African countries of unfair trade practices and said nearly all U.S. films on the Kenyan video market were pirated copies.

U.S. embassy official Louis Segesvary says Washington is still concerned about the enforcement of intellectual property rights in Kenya, particularly on videos.

Many Kenyan libraries do their own cassette duplication, and Segesvary wants this to be allowed only under licence. He says: "A licence or letter of authority from the film producers is a requirement and serves as an indemnity against infringement."

Some action has already been taken to curb the pirates. A joint effort by the Kenya Film Corporation and a company repre-

senting the U.S. concern, Warner Home Video, resulted in the seizure of hundreds of bootleg tapes. But there have been no prosecutions.

One video dealer, who declined to be named, said many original videos were brought in by airline staff and then copied. But most came over the border from Tanzania.

Joseph Olita, who starred in a film about the toppled Ugandan dictator Idi Amin and who now runs a video firm, points out that the video business provides employment to thousands of people. He accuses film companies of being unnecessarily restrictive. "Restriction breeds temptation," he says. "The policy of releasing video copies long after the premiere makes people in disadvantaged situations long to see the picture in any form."

Sam Mwale, director of the independent Policy Research Group, attributes the thriving business in illegal videos to their cheapness, the local market's acceptance of lower quality, and the fear of video business owners that genuine tapes might not be returned.

He urges Kenya to uphold its international trade obligations and lower the duty on imported original videos to make them more competitive — Gemini News.



Models present evening dresses from the collection of French fashion designer Pierre Balmain in Tunisia. Proceeds from the fashion show will go to the National Solidarity Fund promoted by Tunisian President Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali to aid the poor (Reuters photo)



## Disney turns to Japanese cartoonist for new look

By Nao Nakanishi  
Reuters

TOKYO — Giant sci-fi beetles, bare-bottomed heroines on gliders, and a pigman aviator are not exactly classic Disney cartoon material.

Yet Walt Disney is bankrolling the global release of the next cartoon from Hayao Miyazaki, the Japanese director from whose fertile imagination the images sprang.

Miyazaki has as quirky a view of his new employer as some of his characters.

"They are boring," Miyazaki said of his Disney partner's films at an interview at his studio in suburban Tokyo.

"Though I have friends there and they seem to like my work," he adds.

Miyazaki believes that Disney films have lost the dignity they once had and do not address broad human issues any more.

"I despise films made purely for entertainment. It is not enough to make people laugh," Miyazaki said. "Like other arts ... film should give a glimpse into the world's secrets."

Bearing Disney Miyazaki's last two films were smash hits in Japan.

Cinema industry figures show that domestic distribution income from "Porco Rosso" and "Whisper of the Heart," surpassed that of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" and "Pocahontas".

His new cartoon film, "The Princess Mononoke", is the first from Miyazaki's studio Ghibli to be distributed globally by Walt Disney since the two struck a cooperation deal last year.

Around 100 artists are working to complete about 125,000 pictures for "The Princess Mononoke" which is planned for release in July.

Miyazaki said the film might be his last.

Fifteen-year project he has staked everything, including the future of himself and the studio, on the two-billion Yen (\$16 million) film he has been working on for more than 15 years.

"I wouldn't mind too much if I cannot make films any more. I've lived long enough. I would love to retire," said the 56-year-old director.

Studio Ghibli's films, at least technically, have the air of the early Walt Disney at his most detailed and inventive.

In a Miyazaki cartoon, the eye is captured not only by the main action, which is often the only

moving part of a standard cartoon, but also by a group of subplot actions and events in a precise three-dimensional space around it.

Miyazaki and his colleague Isao Takahata have captured a strong following by attention to detail, colour, and movement in space.

Flying pig one recurrent theme in a Miyazaki cartoon is aviation in the 1920s and 1930s, which provides plenty of opportunity to display those traits. "Porco Rosso", featuring an aviator with a human body and the head of a pig, is essentially a violent aerial ballet in cartoon.

"In those days, planes often crashed and people were killed. I like men and women who give up living an ordinary life on earth and vanish in the air," said Miyazaki.

Asked if he made films differently since the cooperation with Walt Disney, Miyazaki said: "No. We can make films only our way. We live in Japan and we see things from here."

He said the U.S. film giant had also accepted his way of making films and did not regard studio Ghibli as its subcontractor.

"Disney has grasped that the Japanese market is different.

They now think there might be some other markets that like films made for a Japanese audience," he said.

Japanese animation, which generally favours dark and violent worlds as a theme, has already made an international impact.

Films such as the post-nuclear fantasy "Akira" have global cult followings.

Miyazaki's themes, in comparison, are gentler.

The new film is about the environmental and spiritual impact of human encroachment on nature.

"The Princess Mononoke" is our attempt to confront the largest problem of our time," Miyazaki said.

And if he can make another film, Miyazaki wants it to be about worms: tiny worms, ugly worms, poisonous worms which fight for their existence in a world full of exhausts.

"It would be wonderful if children didn't kill bugs after seeing the film," he said.









Palestinians, including small children, break through Palestinian police lines Wednesday as they rush forward to confront Israeli soldiers following the funeral of a Palestinian who was killed yesterday during clashes (Reuters photo)

## Netanyahu rejects EU proposal for 'code of conduct' with Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected European proposals for resolving the Mideast peace crisis Wednesday as he prepared to leave on a European tour.

A spokesman for the right-wing Israeli premier said a proposal put forward by the 15-member European Union for Israelis and Palestinians to accept a "code of conduct" which would include a halt to both anti-Israeli violence and Jewish settlement growth was unacceptable.

"Any government which has a trace of decency would flatly reject a comparison between murders and (home) construction," said David Bar-Ilan, Mr. Netanyahu's media and policy advisor.

"Mr. Netanyahu was scheduled to leave later Wednesday for the Netherlands, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency. He

will travel to Rome Friday for an Israel-Italy economic conference.

The EU's Mideast envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, on Tuesday proposed a "code of good conduct" for Israelis and Palestinians to encourage dialogue between them.

Palestinians accuse Israel of violating the peace process by building a settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, a move which has triggered three weeks of deadly violence in the West Bank.

Israel, for its part, accuses Palestinian President Yasser Arafat of at least tacitly giving a green light for political violence including a Hamas suicide bombing which killed three Israelis in Tel Aviv on March 21.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said the Europeans, "which have good relations with Arab countries and the Palestinians, should make them

understand that negotiations cannot go hand in hand with terrorism."

On Tuesday, Mr. Netanyahu said the EU should help create the right conditions for dialogue, notably by investing in the Palestinian self-rule areas — suggesting he would not welcome EU intervention in the political arena.

The EU is both the biggest donor to the Palestinian National Authority and Israel's biggest trading partner.

It is now seeking a greater role in the crisis-hit Middle East peace process, of which the United States, Israel's main ally, is the key sponsor.

During a meeting in Brussels Monday, EU member nations agreed proposals to put to the United States for a joint action to relaunch the peace process.

## Leah Rabin lashes out against Israeli premier

WASHINGTON (R) — Leah Rabin, the widow of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said on Tuesday she could never forgive his successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, for fostering a "hostile climate" that led to her husband's assassination in 1995.

"I hold him responsible for creating the very hostile climate which eventually led to his murder, so how can I ever forgive," she said in an interview on the CNN programme Worldview.

Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the conservative Likud Party, and Rabin, head of Israel's Labour Party, were political foes. Five months after Rabin was shot dead by a right-wing Israeli gunman, Mr. Netanyahu was elected prime minister.

Mrs. Rabin described a photograph of Mr. Netanyahu leading a demonstration in which people were carrying a coffin bearing the sign

"Yitzhak Rabin — the murderer of Zionism."

"He bears the responsibility for creating a politically hostile climate against my husband, saying this man doesn't know where he's taking us, he's misleading us, he is really destroying our future," she said.

Asked if she could ever forgive Mr. Netanyahu, Mrs. Rabin replied: "I don't believe so, I really don't believe so."

Rabin will be presented with the Anwar Sadat Peace Achievement Award honouring her slain husband, on Wednesday night. She was to meet President Bill Clinton at the White House on Wednesday.

Mr. Rabin, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and then Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their 1993 interim accord providing limited Palestinian self-rule and a framework intended to lead to a final peace deal.

## Clashes rage in Hebron

(Continued from page 1)

not to inflict large numbers of casualties," he said. If that happened, he said, "I cannot predict what will happen."

Eighty people died in protests last September that deteriorated into gunbattles between Palestinian police and Israeli soldiers.

Ahmad Qouriea speaker of the Palestinian parliament and former chief negotiator with Israel, said Wednesday that the armed settlers were "terrorists" and should be disarmed.

But David Bar Ilan, a top aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the settlers were armed for their protection.

"In the vast majority of cases, the settlers have used arms only to defend themselves," Mr. Bar-Ilan said. "Such a request is nothing short of outrageous."

Palestinians said the Jewish students opened fire Tuesday without provocation, killing Assam Rashid Arafat, 23. But Israeli officials claimed the students fired after a Palestinian sprayed them with tear-gas, burning their face and eyes.

The two students were released Wednesday on 20,000 shekels (about \$6,000) bail and ordered to stay out of Hebron for the next 60 days.

The incident was the second involving Jewish settlers this week. On Monday, a Jewish settler shot and seriously wounded a Palestinian after being stoned in the West Bank town of Kharbata. His detention was extended Wednesday at a hearing.

Israeli soldiers raided a Palestinian university in the East Jerusalem suburb overnight, arresting 20 suspected militants, students

said Wednesday.

The Islamic student coalition at Al Quds University, located in Abu Dis village on the outskirts of Arab East Jerusalem, said soldiers stormed the campus dormitories after midnight and took away 20 students.

The soldiers "tried to terrorise the students" suspected of involvement with the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), according to a statement sent to news organisations.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said Wednesday that Palestinians need to increase their efforts against terrorism so that political negotiations can resume.

"This situation is not helping anybody," he said.

But Saeb Erakat, the chief Palestinian negotiator who will accompany Arafat deputy Mahmoud Abbas to Washington, said their mission was to insist Israel be forced to halt all settlement building as part of any plan to revive peace negotiations.

"Arafat has given orders that all settlement activity should stop and that Israel take no further unilateral decisions," Mr. Erakat told reporters before leaving for talks in Amman with Jordanian leaders on his way to Washington.

Hassan Asfour, Mr. Erakat's deputy, said the Palestinians also insisted that Israel follow through with implementing already signed peace agreements which require further troop withdrawals from the West Bank and authorisation to open Palestinian air and sea ports.

"We want an American mechanism to implement what has been agreed upon," he said.

## Palestinians want more protests

(Continued from page 1)

decline of faith in organized Palestinian political factions.

Trust in Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, most closely identified with the Oslo peace process, fell from 47.4 per cent in March to 43.4 per cent, while the number of people who said they trusted no political or religious faction rose from 21 to 26 per cent.

Finally, when asked what is the most important issue facing Palestinian society, only 23 per cent chose completing peace negotiations with Israel, while 40 per cent said improving the economic situation.

The poll was conducted among 1,200 Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Arab East Jerusalem. Its margin of error was three per cent.

## Bombs target home, car in Corsica

AJACCIO, Corsica (R) — Two bombs exploded overnight in Corsica, damaging a home and destroying a car but causing no injuries, police said.

The first explosion, at 11:30 p.m. (2130 GMT) Tuesday in Cervione in the south of the French Mediterranean island, blew apart the door of a house owned by a retired French worker.

The house was unoccupied. The owner lives in Versailles, France, most of the time.

The second explosion, at 12:30 a.m. Wednesday (2230 GMT Tuesday) in Ajaccio, destroyed an empty, parked car.

The owner of the car was not identified.

No one claimed responsibility for the blasts but Corsican separatists have been behind such attacks in the past. The same house was targeted on Feb. 1 this year when the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) "historic wing", a leading separatist group on the island, detonated 96 charges across Corsica.

## Financier wanted by U.S., S. Arabia still in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Saudi Arabian dissident Osama Ben Laden is in Afghanistan as a "guest," a spokesman of the Afghan Taliban militia said Wednesday, denying reports the international fugitive had left the country.

The official denied recent local press reports that Mr. Ben Laden, a billionaire wanted by the United States and Saudi Arabia on charges of financing international terrorism, had been detained in Afghanistan or left the country for an unknown destination.

The spokesman said he had simply changed his address. Taliban has refused extradition requests while

urging Mr. Ben Laden not to use Afghan soil to launch attacks overseas.

"Neither the Saudi government has demanded Mr. Ben Laden's extradition nor the Taliban have offered to hand him over in return for money," the spokesman at the Taliban-controlled Afghan embassy here said in a statement.

Mr. Ben Laden has taken up residence in Kandahar, the Taliban base in south-west Afghanistan, according to the "wish" of the supreme Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar Akhund, the spokesman said.

Previously the Saudi billionaire had been living in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad.

"He will continue to live

in Afghanistan as a guest and refugee without any difficulty from the Taliban government," the spokesman said.

Mr. Ben Laden would not engage in any activity against Saudi Arabia or any other government from Afghan soil, the spokesman said, adding that the Saudi government "is satisfied" with this assurance.

"Ben Laden has moved to Kandahar of his own free will. It is against the Afghan tradition to arrest a guest or hand him over to anyone," the spokesman added.

The spokesman blamed an unspecified "lobby" for spreading "unfounded" rumours to defame the Taliban militia.

## New Cyprus cabinet sworn in after reshuffle

NICOSIA (R) — Five new members of the 11-member Cyprus cabinet were sworn in on Wednesday after the first reshuffle in the centre-right government since it came to power in 1995.

Among the new appointees, former government spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides took over as foreign minister, replacing Alecos Michaelides who was among those dismissed.

The cabinet shake up on Tuesday was the first since veteran right-wing politician Glafcos Clerides was elected for a five-year term in February 1993.

Government officials have described the reshuffle as an act of renewal, and not an indication that Mr. Clerides was displeased with the job of any minister. But opposition parties quickly branded it as a sign of government failure.

The government has been dismissive of suggestions the reshuffle aims at boosting Mr. Clerides's reelection chances in a poll due in less than a year. Mr. Clerides has not given a firm answer on whether he will run again.

The ministries of justice, education, health and communications were given to

new appointees, while all other ministers, including finance, kept their jobs.

Five of those unaffected are members of the centre-right Democratic Party, junior partner in the government. The remainder were members of the right-wing Democratic Rally Party.

Mr. Clerides's Greek Cypriot administration is recognised as the only legitimate government in Cyprus, which has been divided since Turkey invaded its north in 1974 in response to a brief coup engineered by the colonels ruling in Greece at the time.

## Clinton wants Netanyahu to prove intentions

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Clinton rejected a reporter's suggestion that the United States was losing leverage with Israel, saying, "I wouldn't assume that based on the comments that have been made so far."

And he said the next step in trying to revive the Middle East talks, disrupted by Israel's decision to build new Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem, would come when a Palestinian delegation visits the White House this week.

"It's going to depend on what it's always depended on ... (and that is) the parties taking responsibility," said Mr. Clinton, who has made clear he prefers not to resort to a high-pressure, U.S.-run peace summit just yet. He repeated his promise of recent days that "we're going to do our best to get this thing going again."

He said Mr. Netanyahu had reassured him on Monday of Israel's commitment to the Oslo accords, which established a framework for reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The prime minister has said repeatedly publicly and said again to me when he was here that even though he did not agree with everything about Oslo, he felt that the Israeli government was bound by it.

and he thought that he ought to honour it ... And I believe it remains his position," he said.

Critics charge that fear of offending politically powerful and wealthy American Jewish lobby groups that back Israel has kept Mr. Clinton from making the tough moves necessary to rescue the peace process from its current crisis.

Administration officials respond that they are even-handed "facilitators" between Israelis and Palestinians and that it is up to the parties — not the United States — to resolve their problems for themselves.

That message was reaffirmed by Mr. Clinton earlier on Tuesday. "I want these parties to do what they have to do to get this process up and going again," he said.

But House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich on Tuesday accused Mr. Arafat of backing a "terrorist" campaign against Israel and urged Mr. Clinton to demand the Palestinian leader end the violence immediately.

"How can the American government claim any possible sense of moral equality between a genuine democracy seeking peace at the risk of lives of its citizens and a force which after three years has refused to renounce its destruction of Israel?" the Georgia Repub-

lican asked in a speech to the American Israel public affairs committee.

Instead of trying to exert pressure on Israel, Mr. Gingrich said Mr. Clinton ought to demand Arafat live up to the promises he made in Oslo.

"There should be no question of any pressure on the Israeli government to make any concessions until Arafat has met those demands ... And the burden should be placed by the American government on Arafat and the Palestinian Authority before a word is said to Israel," Mr. Gingrich said.

Mr. Arafat's spokesman on Wednesday slammed Mr. Gingrich.

"Mr. Gingrich will not be able to improve his bad image with the American people by attacking the Palestinian people and President Arafat in order to satisfy the Jewish lobby in the United States," spokesman Marwan Kanafani said in a statement.

"Gingrich did not show only a shameful ignorance of international politics but he also contributed to supporting the Israeli extremists to continue challenging the international community and to commit more violations against the political and human rights of the Palestinian people," said the statement.

## Clinton, Chretien agree to disagree on Cuba

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien agreed to disagree on Tuesday on the best way to encourage democracy in Cuba, with Clinton saying neither country's policy had worked so far.

The two leaders did not let their differences on Cuba disrupt the friendly nature of Chretien's official visit to Washington, which had got off to an unofficial start on Monday night when the Canadian leader dropped by the White House for cognac and a private chat with Clinton.

At a news conference after their official talks on Tuesday the two joined forces to urge the U.S. Congress to clear a speedy path for U.S. negotiation of an expansion of the

North American Free Trade Agreement to include Chile.

"I am very concerned that we have not passed fast-track authority in this country," said Clinton.

Chretien said he hoped Clinton would be able to convince Congress to proceed on the authority for Chile. "It's urgent that we move because some are getting impatient in South America," he said.

Fast-track authority would allow U.S. trade officials to negotiate trade deals without fear Congress will change them. Lawmakers would be able to vote for an agreement or against it, but would not be allowed to amend it.

Clinton had such authority to negotiate deals between the United States, Canada and Mexico, and wants it again to negotiate a deal with Chile.

"I think we have to do it. It's clear that expanding trade will strengthen democracy in Latin America and will strengthen our hand in the second-fastest growing area in the world," Clinton said.

In an otherwise sunny relationship, the United States and Canada are at odds over Cuba. Canada has been a fierce critic of the U.S. Helms-Burton Law, which seeks to punish some companies in third countries that do business with Cuba.

The United States does not particularly like Canada's policy of commercial and diplomatic engagement with the communist state. Canada is Cuba's largest foreign investor and largest source of foreign exchange and advocates quiet diplomacy on democracy and human rights.

## Iraq defies U.N. embargo

(Continued from page 1)

defiant when they left Baghdad. Sheikh Ibrahim Dirbaz said he was determined to reach Mecca or die a martyr on the way.

Others said they were sick and could not stand the hardship of the 2,000 kilometres land journey to Saudi Arabia. Of the 104 pilgrims, 40 were women.

Senior Iraqi officials, including two ministers, took part in a farewell ceremony before the pilgrims took off.

Sheep were sacrificed next to the runway in Baghdad in celebration while onlookers chanted "Allahu Akbar" and the plane's pilot gave a victory sign through the cockpit window.

The pilgrims, dressed in plain white robes, stretched out on the ground in prayer before boarding the plane which had to fly to Saudi Arabia via Jordan to avoid an allied-imposed no-fly zone in southern Iraq.

gious Affairs Minister Abdul Muneim Ahmad Saleh said the sending of the plane to Saudi Arabia despite the U.N. trade sanctions was "a humanitarian endeavour and had no other purpose in mind... There may be some problems but the aim is humanitarian."

"We call on our brethren in the Islamic World to take note of this unfair embargo which infidel countries have imposed and in which Arab and Islamic states are taking part," Mr. Saleh said.

Some 1,000 Iraqi Muslims had arrived in Saudi Arabia by road on Tuesday for the Hajj, the first group from Iraq to perform the annual pilgrimage to Mecca since 1994.

Mr. Saleh said Iraq under quotas set by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was allowed to send 20,000 pilgrims to Mecca per year "but conditions of sanctions prevent us from doing so."

Saeed, 63, said he was sick and needed to make the Hajj to fulfill one main pillar of his religion.

All Muslims should perform the Hajj at least once in their lives if they have the means. It is one of Islam's five essential obligations for believers.

The U.N. Security Council had rejected a request by Iraq to use its civil aircraft to fly this year's pilgrims to Mecca. It also turned down a plea by Baghdad to have part of its assets frozen abroad released for Hajj purposes.

The pilgrims said they were notified of the flight four days in advance. Iraqi Airways Director Rabih Mohammad Saleh said he hoped it would lead to a speedy resumption of the company's regular flights.

In 1994, only 474 Iraqis made the pilgrimage. Iraqi officials at the time blamed the low turnout on economic troubles caused by the U.N. sanctions.

Pilgrim Abdul Sahib

Iraqi Endowment and Reli-



# Netanyahu policies scaring foreign investors away from Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Arab-Israeli peace process crisis is frightening off foreign investors, contributing to the economic slowdown that has hit Israel since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office in June.

"The multinationals which moved here in recent years have tended to freeze their development programmes, while those which were contemplating the move have held off," said Tel Aviv business attorney Eytan Liraz, who represents European and U.S. banks and other companies.

An international relations official at Bank Hapoalim, Israel's largest bank, who asked not to be identified, said, "Israel is no longer viewed as an ideal base for multinationals' activities in the Middle East."

"Foreign investors fear political instability more than anything else. They don't know where the region is going anymore, while with the previous government, peace was in sight," he added.

Israel is seen as a country "which is becoming dangerous again" and is losing its "emerging market" image with international investment funds, the official said.

Since it concluded the autonomy agreements with the Palestinians in 1993, Israel had been receiving

peace dividends in the form of a lifting of the Arab boycott and better financial risk ratings from evaluators Moody's and Standard and Poor's.

Mr. Liraz furnished as an example of the investors' cooling enthusiasm a major U.S. confection company which gave up plans to establish itself in Israel.

The company "thought that it could export from Israel to Jordan and the Gulf countries. But with the current tension, the plan no longer seems realistic," he said.

Yaacov Frenkel, the governor of the Bank of Israel, the nation's central bank, said that "the uncertainty about the peace process has resulted in a decline in investment."

The facts run contrary to the dreams of Mr. Netanyahu, who continues to predict that Israel will become "a major world economic power" and will enjoy by the beginning of the next century a gross national product (GNP) higher than Britain's.

In recent years foreign investments have been the locomotive driving the country's growth. Within three years, they more than tripled, reaching a record \$2.7 billion in 1996.

"The influx of capital represents two (percentage) points of GNP growth per year," the Hapoalim official

estimated. Since the end of 1996, economic activity has been dropping.

According to an industry association poll, 44 per cent of the companies have recorded declines in exports, the highest percentage to give such a response since 1989.

A third of the companies' leaders expected layoffs. The unemployment rate, which fell from 10 per cent of the workforce in 1993 to 6.7 per cent this year, may climb again in the coming months.

The Bank of Israel expects GNP growth of four per cent this year, compared to an annual average of six per cent in real terms since the beginning of the 1990s.

However, there was one positive point. Foreigners remain interested in small high-tech Israeli companies in the information and electronics industries.

"The products developed in these sectors are less sensitive to political circumstances in the Middle East because they are above all destined for the U.S., European and Asian markets," the Hapoalim official said.

Meanwhile, companies using the industry and trade ministry's Investment Centre invested \$213 million in Israeli industry in the first quarter of 1997, down 46 per cent from the same period a year ago, the ministry said Tuesday.

"The downward trend has continued now for several months. It is the result of the slowing that began in the economy generally and in industry in particular," Investment Centre Manager David Baruch said in a statement.

The investment figure was down 33 per cent when compared to the first quarter of 1995.

The ministry said investments by companies who received grants from the centre in the quarter totalled \$151 million, down 55 per cent from last year.

Investments by companies who received tax benefits rather than subsidies amounted to \$59 million in the first quarter, a rise of 80 per cent over a year earlier. The centre said the rise came from a sharp expansion of investment in high technology.

Mr. Baruch said the slowdown had been expected after several years of 10 to 30 per cent annual growth in investment.

The centre in the first quarter approved new investments totalling \$387 million, including many requests made in 1996 but for which there were no funds.

There was a 36 per cent decline in new requests for subsidies received by the centre in the first quarter.

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1997

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Seek out the advice of experts today with both old and new points of views. Combine these two opinions and get the best of both worlds. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your loved ones for some fun activities.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You may encounter an opportunity today to engage in an old-fashioned recreation, so make the best of this situation. This would brighten your mood considerably, thereby making your career activities much more productive.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Labour on modernising and improving the condition of your house today, then invite some old friends in for an evening of entertaining and recreational activities which everyone will enjoy greatly.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Get your transportation situation better organised today, while you have the time. Try to cut down on your expenses thereby having extra funds for an emergency which could come in the days ahead if you are not careful.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Make some rearrangements at home today which will add some cheer and comfort to the place, however, make sure you don't spend too much money, thereby you can have some extra funds for the days ahead.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You may feel a bit run down this morning, however, spend the day with some good friends. By later this evening, you should feel quite content and peaceful with your loved ones and thereby relaxed for the days ahead.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Make some time today to sit down and discuss with your mate how you can get along better in the days ahead. Teamwork can work wonders, so keep an open mind and pursue the best course of action which will be successful.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) If you having some difficulty getting your affairs organised today, seek out the advice of an expert and use his or her suggestions. Be sure to get plenty of rest later this evening and thereby be prepared for business activities.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Show that you value the opinion of a superior, and you'll get much more support from this person today and in the days ahead. Later this evening would be a good time to consult with knowledgeable people for their advice.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) A new enterprise could bring your greater success today, however, be sure you understand all of the liabilities before becoming involved. Later this evening would be good for going out on the town with close friend for a good time.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Forget all that socialising today, and concern yourself with more practical matters. Your mate can give you some good advice later this evening, if you will listen to what is said and take it to heart.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Be alert to what is happening around you today so that you can take advantage of any opportunities. Make revisions to a recent agreement and thereby won't be any misunderstanding which could occur.

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## REUTERS

## REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit
US Dollar	1.7230	0.0171	1.4770	128.81	1.3675	1701.00	1.5382	6.5630	
DE Mark	0.3604	2.7940	0.3575	0.3571	73.39	0.4099	2755.43	1.1263	3.2675
GB Sterling	1.8204	0.6770	1.1055	1.1033	204.39	2.2483	2755.43	1.1418	3.4028
CH Franc	0.0079	1.3581	0.4880	1.1033	85.84	0.3304	1150.81	431.24	3.3283
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3581	0.4880	1.1033	85.84	0.3304	1150.81	431.24	3.3283
CA Dollar	0.7207	1.2543	0.4933	1.0605	1.00	1.2118	1.3853	1.3853	4.5686
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0129	0.3826	0.0868	1343.00	0.8166		11.39	3.4034
NL Guilder	0.3186	0.8181	0.3181	78.15	85.40	0.7750	0.7750	2.9008	
FR Franc	0.1723	0.2970	0.1063	23.4404	21.85	0.2392	33.40	33.4000	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit	Rate	Unit
US Dollar	0.7080	3.7804	0.5770	3.6491	0.3041	3.6710	1546.00	3.3888	
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	0.5272	0.5254	0.1414	0.2225	0.1688	2176.14	4.7874	
GB Sterling	0.2886	0.1888	0.1005	0.07	0.0811	0.85	410.62	0.9038	
Bahraini Dinar	2.55	1.3781	0.6488	0.85	0.0007	0.75	4085.27	0.9973	
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	0.0835	1.01	423.07	0.9311		
Kuwait Dinar	0.2886	2.3282	12.3328	1.3398	11.97	0.8828	3084.12	0.9311	
Emirates Dinar	0.2734	0.1929	1.0216	0.1027	0.8916	0.8828	419.50	0.9233	
Libaneses 1000	0.85	0.6897	2.6163	0.2448	2.8537	0.7078	2.8537	2.2068	
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2088	1.1065	0.1112	1.0740	0.0887	1.0831	454.35	

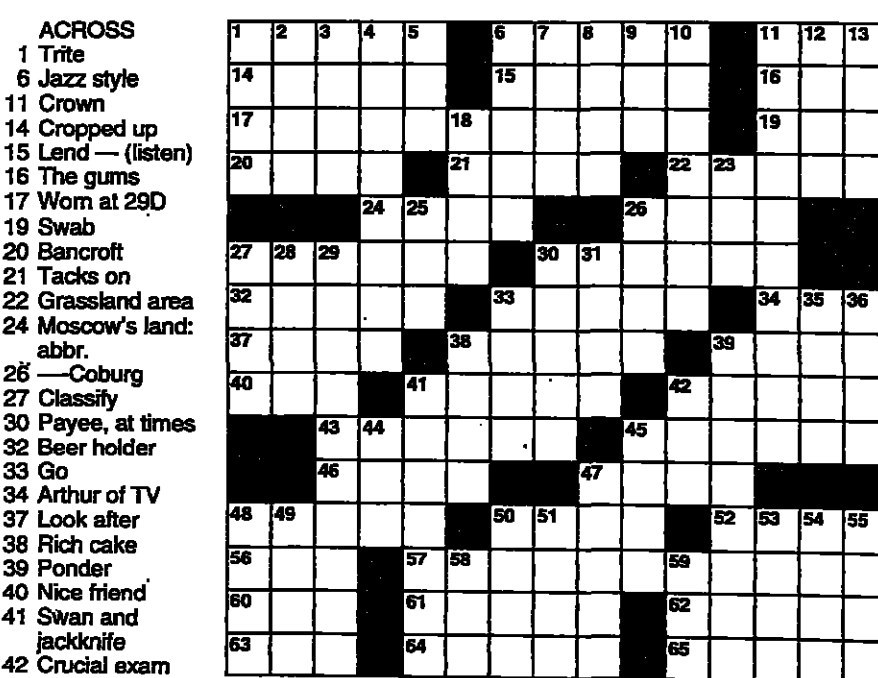
Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity
Brent	17.85	17.20	SA Ryial	0.2688	0.4587	0.16455	0.39409	33.8387	
WTI	18.80	18.30	AE Dirham	0.2724	0.56882	0.16611	0.40281	54.871	
Bony	17.85	17.20	KW Dinar	3.2884	0.56883	0.20222	4.85909	417.382	
Dubai	18.43	16.85	QH Dinar	0.3775	0.47287	0.5372	3.82003	338.7	
UL Gas	188.00	188.00	CY Pound	1.5471	3.5677	1.2017	2.8758	247.077	

Metal Prices									
Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity
Gold (oz's)	347.85	348.35	USD	5.58	5.58	5.57	6.07	6.25	
Silver (oz's)	4.78	4.8	GBP	0.57	0.52	0.53	6.89	6.90	
Platinum (oz's)	367	368	JPY	0.39	0.53	0.42	0.43	0.49	
AL (3 Months)	1898	1898	DEM	3.06	3.11	3.06	3.23	3.12	
CU (3 Months)	2308	2308	FRF	3.18	3.22	3.24	3.29	3.35	
Zinc (3 Months)	1284.5	1284.5	CHF	1.33	1.37	1.31	1.38	1.33	
Lead (3 Months)	690	691	ITL	7.13	7.04	6.94	6.83	6.91	
Ni (3 Months)	7460	7470							

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change	Index
New York	DOW JONES	6891.08	7.18	-0.11	6839	6891.73	6890.16		
New York	S&P 500	758.81	-0.31	-0.31	758.53	758.08	756.12		
London	FT-SE 100	4282.2	22.9	0.54	4301.5	4287.8	4289.3		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	7773.37	-318.33	-3.77	7880.8	7770.34	7802.17		
Paris	CAC 40	2817.55	38.55	1.40	2828.81	2810.34	2879		
Frankfurt	DAX	3359.46	28.7	0.85	3373.25	3367.38	3328.76		

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity	Unit	Rate	Commodity
Coffee (c/lbs)	184.42	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710				
Cocoa (c/lbs)	4223	Spot	DE Mark	0.567	0.567	1.1839			
Sugar (c/lbs)	311.4	Spot	DE Mark	0.4118	0.4118	0.4139			
Wheat (c/lbs)	22.7	Spot	CH Franc	0.4678	0.4678	0.4694			
Soy (c/lbs)	22.78	Spot	FR Franc	0.1223	0.1223	0.1229			
Tea (c/lbs)	0	Spot	JP Yen	0.0377	0.0377	0.03806			
Barley (c/lbs)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.368	0.3678				
Rice (c/lbs)	0	Spot	IT Lira	0.5075	0.5075	0.5075			

## THE Daily Crossword



by Philip J. Anderson

ACROSS									
1	Trite	6	Jazz style	11	Crown	14	Cropped up	15	Lend — (listen)
16	The gums	17	Wom at 29D	18	Swab	19	Bancroft	20	Tacks on
21	Grassland area	22	Moscow's land: abbr.	25	Coburg	26	Classify	27	Payee, at times
28	Beer holder	29	Go	30	Arthur of TV	31	Look after	32	Rich cake
33	Ponder	34	Nice friend	35	Swan and jackknife	36	Crucial exam	37	Egg dish
38	Huggable	39	Engrossed	40	Minnesinger kin	41	River horse	42	Apothecary weight
43	Tardy	44	Cup handle	45	Often seen at 29D	46	In the past	47	Dodge
48	Pungent bulb	49	Hanks	50	A US veep	51	Greek gathering place	52	Sites for spelling
53	Galley need, once	54	Make ready	55	Wom at 29D	56	Cockeyed	57	Family member
58	Cartoonist of old	59	Fire	60	Coffee vessel	61	Put aside	62	Nick and Nora's dog
63	Goblet feature	64	High school dance	65	Henri's topper	66	Greasy spoon sign?	67	Adore
68	Israeli airline	69	Friend in need	70	Bad news, in pinball	71	So-so	72	Removed from office
73	Sable or mink	74	AAA offering	75	Arrived	76	"— in Toyland"	77	Warmth
78	"Othello" villain	79	Attract	80	Took a cab	81	Exchange premium	82	God of thunder
83	Sicilian mount	84	Govt. org.	85	Mauna —				

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## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Your daily routines may seem a bit boring today, however if you go running off to something new, you could get into a whole heap of difficulty. Later this evening would be good for you to go out on the town with your mate.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You should not involve yourself today in a disagreement between a good friend and a fellow business associate, it will resolve itself very quickly. Later this evening you can meet with a bigwig and devise a plan of action.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Schedule your time today carefully so that you can handle home and family affairs without neglecting your business and personal interests. Later this evening would be a good time to do recreational activities with close friends.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Steer clear today of a disagreement between a good friend and a fellow associate. Keep occupied with your career activities, however don't get bogged down with unnecessary tasks which will waste your time and lower your efficiency.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Trying to make peace between your mate and a fellow business associate today would not be wise, you would likely wind up being the loser. Later tonight, you can meet with knowledgeable people and get their advice.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Don't allow a family friend keep you at home today doing something unimportant when you have vital matters to deal with in business. Tonight will be a good time for you to devise a plan of action for your success on a project.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You should plan to spend more time with your mate tonight, so don't accept a social invitation which is extended to alone, however you can attend if your mate is asked. Tonight you can meet with fellow associates.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Ignore that individual today who keeps pestering you to lend him or her money, and stay around individuals with whom you feel comfortable. Later this evening will be a good time to attend fun activities with your close friends.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Do something to assist a person in the business today who can in the days ahead assist you with credit and career affairs, however maintain your pride. This evening will be a good time to spend some quality time with loved ones.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Plan your schedule today so that you'll have plenty of time for your loved ones and close friends. Don't allow anyone to hinder your progress in business activities which can get noticed by a bigwig.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) If a good friend needs your assistance to pay an important bill today, be generous in your offering. This person has done you many favours in previous time. Tonight, will be good to stay home and relax with your loved ones.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You should not get involved in a disagreement today between a superior and a fellow associate, or you could end up sweeping the floors and not making the same level of your salary as before, which can reduce your progress.



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## Holyfield-Tyson bout postponed

LAS VEGAS (R) — The rematch between Evander Holyfield and Mike Tyson, originally scheduled for May 3, has been postponed because Tyson suffered a cut in sparring, the head of the Nevada State Athletic Commission said on Tuesday.

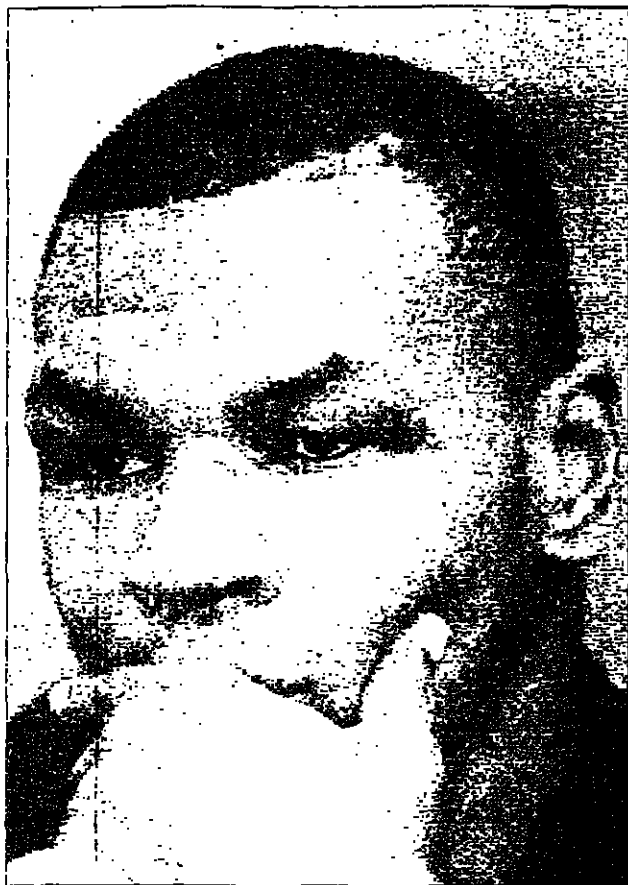
Tyson took three stitches to close a cut over his left eye, suffered in sparring on Tuesday, sources close to the Tyson camp said.

Don King Productions, which promotes Tyson, has scheduled a news conference at the MGM Grand Hotel where the much anticipated rematch was to have been held.

The new date under discussion is June 28, Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director Ratner said.

Ratner said a commission doctor will examine Tyson before the news conference.

ESPN Cable Television reported the cut Tyson suffered in sparring Tuesday is in the same spot where Tyson was cut when he lost his World Boxing Association title to Holyfield on November 9th. According to ESPN the cut was re-opened three weeks



Boxer Mike Tyson attends a press conference held to announce the postponement of his May 3 rematch with Evander Holyfield, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Tyson reopened a cut above his left eye in training and said he was following the advice of doctors in postponing the fight (Reuters photo)

ago and never healed properly.

This is not the first time Tyson has pulled out of a fight with Holyfield.

Their 1991 fight was postponed because Tyson had bruised ribs, and was cancelled after Tyson was charged with rape. Tyson ultimately spent three years in prison on the rape conviction.

Last July, Tyson postponed a bout with Bruce Seldon due to bronchitis, and a broken thumb forced the postponement of a fight with Buster Mathis Jr. in November, 1995.

The rematch between the current and former heavyweight champions was expected to have been the most lucrative in boxing history.

Holyfield was to receive about \$35 million, and could increase his pay-day to \$50 million from a cut of pay-per-view sales. Tyson will likely get \$20 million.

Holyfield dominated Tyson in their first fight from start to finish, before stopping him in the 11th round.

## Fulham, Wigan gain promotion

LONDON (AFP) — Oldham picked up a crucial point in their English First Division battle against relegation when they held visiting Birmingham to a 2-2 draw.

And Fulham and Wigan ensured promotion from Division Three — Fulham forcing a 0-0 draw at Mansfield and Wigan beating visiting Colchester 1-0. Oldham, with only three wins in their last 16 games, twice trailed but came back on Tuesday.

Birmingham went clear through Paul Furlong after just 17 minutes but a Lee Richardson penalty 12 minutes later put the home side level.

Sixty seconds later Birmingham were in front again with a goal from Martin Grainger — but Paul Reid equalised six minutes after the break with a superbly flighted free-kick.

Oldham remain second from the bottom with 39 points from 41 matches.

## Nightmare over for Hodgson

MILAN (AFP) — Roy Hodgson's dream of winning the UEFA Cup with Inter Milan came closer to reality here on Tuesday night, despite a nightmare 45 minutes against French League leaders Monaco.

Inter, 3-0 up in the second-half against 10 men, looked certain to reach the final before a goal by Nigerian Victor Ikpeba lifted Monaco's hopes of an upset in the second leg.

Hodgson was pleased with the first-half performance, but said: "In the second-half, some of the players were a nightmare. And I don't know why."

"It's disappointing because at half-time I thought we could win 4-0 or 5-0." But the Inter coach, who will be in charge of Blackburn Rovers next season, has every faith for the second leg in a defence which has only conceded six goals in their nine UEFA Cup ties.

They can also count on the competition's top goalscorer in Maurizio Ganz, who took his tally to eight on Tuesday night and also laid on Inter's third goal for Ivan Zamorano.

Ganz said: "Before the match, I'd happily have settled for a 3-1 win. But having been 3-0 up and with them down to 10 men, Ikpeba's goal really hurts."

"If it hadn't been for that goal, the second leg would be like a walk in the park."

"Instead, we're going to have to fight all the way and it won't be easy. We've got to hit them on the counter-attack, just as they did to U.S. in the second half here."

For Ganz, who has done his share of warming the substitutes' Bench this sea-

son and even considered moving to Espanyol in the Spanish League, the UEFA Cup has been a godsend.

"I really wasn't expecting it, but this is obviously my lucky competition," he said. "And the goals are a repayment for all the dark times I've been through this season."

Zamorano, who will miss the second leg through suspension, added: "The match was a fair reflection of Inter Milan's season, where we've played well in one match and then badly in another."

"Our second half was not one to remember."

But he told his teammates: "No joking around in the second leg in Monaco — because I want to win the UEFA Cup."

For the future hosts, much will depend on the form of their Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson who, along with Ikpeba, was a constant menace in the second half.

Anderson said: "Despite making lots of mistakes, we showed at the end that we can hit back, and that we can cause big trouble for any side."

"With the score at 3-1, we've still got a 40 per cent chance of reaching the final and I'm sure we'll manage it. I wasn't surprised or impressed by Inter — we gave them the weapons to hurt U.S."

"But believe me, we've learned the lesson."

## Angels beat Yankees in 12 innings...

ANAHEIM, California (R) — Gary Disarcina's fielder's choice with one out in the 12th inning scored Jim Edmonds, lifting the Anaheim Angels to a 10-9 victory over the New York Yankees on Tuesday.

Edmonds led off the inning with a double to left off Jeff Nelson (0-2). Former Yankee Jim Leyritz sacrificed Edmonds to third and Nelson intentionally walked Garret Anderson and Orlando Palmeiro to load the bases. Disarcina chopped Nelson's first pitch up the middle and second baseman Pat Kelly backhanded it. Kelly made an off-balance flip to shortstop Derek Jeter, who couldn't get a throw off as Palmeiro slid into him.

In Oakland, Reggie Jefferson home-

red twice and drove in four runs and Darren Bragg cracked his second career grand slam during a seven-run seventh inning as the Boston Red Sox pounded out 17 hits in a 13-7 victory over the Oakland Athletics.

Bragg had three hits and finished with a career-high five RBI, and Bill Haselman added three hits and one RBI for Boston.

Rick Tricek (2-1) retired the final batter in the sixth for the victory and Butch Henry allowed one run over three innings for his second save.

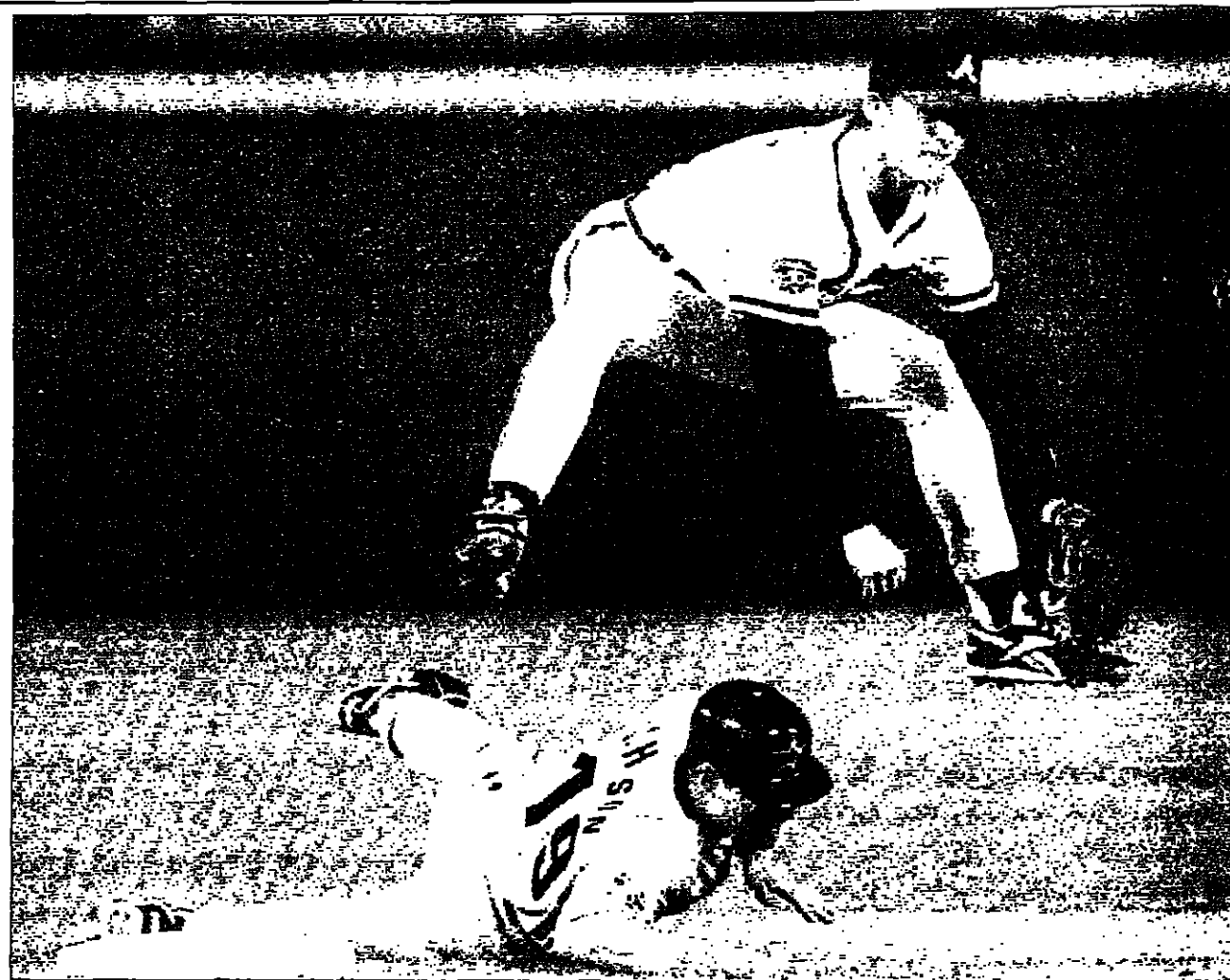
Jose Canseco went 4-for-5 with three RBI, including a home run, for Oakland.

In Seattle, Lee Tinsley's single snapped a tie and sparked a four-run

fifth-inning and Ken Griffey and Jay Buhner each homered and drove in four runs to lift the Seattle Mariners to a 14-8 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

Reliever Albie Lopez (0-1) was tagged for six runs and six hits with five walks and two strikeouts through 2 2/3 innings as the Indians had their three-game winning streak stopped.

Edwin Hurtado (1-0) allowed a run and three hits in 2 1/3 innings of relief for the win. Dennis Martinez was tagged for seven runs and 11 hits over four-plus innings in his first start of the season. The 41-year-old Martinez is in his 22nd year in the majors, having spent the last three with the Indians.



Atlanta Braves' Jeff Blauser leaps over Houston Astros' Russ Johnson as Johnson breaks up a doubleplay on a ball hit by teammate Brad Ausmus in the seventh inning in Atlanta (Reuters photo)

and struck out Roberto Mejia on three pitches to begin the ninth before McGee hit his first pitch over the right-field wall for his first home run of the season.

"You dream of things like that, but I'm not that type of Hitter," McGee said. "I've always been strong enough but I'm a line-drive Hitter that's why I think I've been consistent over the years."

because I stay within myself." Reliever Mark Petkovsek (1-1) limited Montreal to two hits and struck out three over four scoreless Innings for the victory.

In San Francisco, Scott Rolen's two-out single in the seventh scored Gregg Jefferies with the go-ahead run as the Philadelphia Phillies nipped the San

Francisco giants, 2-1. Mark Leiter (1-1) became the first person other than Curt Schilling to win for Philadelphia, giving up an unearned run and three hits

over seven innings for his first win against his former team. Ricky Bontalico struck out three of the four batters he faced for his third save.

### RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE	
Anaheim	10 NY Yankees 9 (12 Inn)
Boston	13 Oakland 7
Seattle	14 Cleveland 8
(PFD - Toronto at White Sox)	

NATIONAL LEAGUE	
Florida	5 Chicago Cubs 3
Atlanta	4 Houston 2
St Louis	2 Montreal 1
Ny Mets	5 Los Angeles 3
Pittsburgh	2 San Diego 0
Philadelphia	2 San Francisco 1

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### The Ministry Of Water And Irrigation Water Authority Of Jordan Announces The Sale Of Old Ipc Steel Pipeline By Public Auction

The Water Authority announces the sale of old IPC steel pipeline (16") by public auction for a total length of 25 KM in Azraq area. The pipeline extends from well No. 14 till well No. 134. The auction will be held on 12th of April 1997 at 11 a.m.

Those who are interested in purchasing the pipes should contact the selling committee at Al-Mafraq Water Directorate. The bidders are requested to submit 20% of the auction value "in cash" or a cheque certified through a reputable bank. The purchaser shall pay customs duties, auction duties, the revenue stamps, and any other taxes and duties.

Eng. Koussei Quteishat  
Acting Secretary General

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Arantxa Sanchez Vicario

## Sanchez Vicario, Martinez advance

AMELIA ISLAND (R) — Second seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and fourth seed Conchita Martinez, both from Spain, won their second-round matches at the \$450,000 Bausch Lomb Championships on Tuesday.

Sanchez Vicario, a two-time champion, rallied past Argentina's Florencia Labat, 3-6 6-2 6-3. Martinez, the 1995 winner, disposed of south African Joanne Kruger, 6-3 6-1.

"I didn't play very well in the first set," Sanchez Vicario said. "I rushed myself. I was not very patient. I made the mistake of letting her get into the match."

Third-seeded American Monica Seles, who reached the finals of both events she entered the last two weeks, withdrew from the tournament Tuesday, suffering from a fever of 103 degrees and bronchitis. Seles fell to World No. 1 Martina Hingis of Switzerland in both the Lipton Championships and Family Circle Cup finals.

Seles was replaced in the draw by lucky loser Diaz Oliva of Argentina, who will face former teenage prodigy Jennifer Capriati of the United States on Wednesday night.

In other second-round action, fifth seed Arke

Huber of Germany stormed past Radka Zrubakova of the Czech Republic, 6-2 6-2, and sixth seed Lindsay Davenport of the United States needed just 40 minutes to roll past Shi-Ting Wang of Taipei in a night match, 6-2 6-0.

Ninth seeded Mary Joe Fernandez of the United States defeated Sarah Pitkowski of France, 6-3 6-0. No. 11 Mary Pierce of France, last year's finalist, crushed Germany's Elena Wagner, 6-0 6-1 and number 13 Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands stopped Adriana Gersi of the Czech Republic, 6-1 6-1.

Fourteenth-seed Elena Likhovtseva of Russia rallied past American Tami Whitlinger-Jones, 2-6 6-4 6-1.

No. 15 Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria pulled out of the event today with a right wrist injury. She was replaced in the draw by Germany's Jana Kandarr, who beat Spain's Cristina Torrens Valero, 6-3 6-2.

In addition, teenage phenom Venus Williams of the United States got past fellow American Jolene Watanabe, 1-6 6-4 6-1. First prize is \$79,000.

## Premier League and FA Cup live on Orbit-ESPN

ORBIT-ESPN Sports will air live and exclusive coverage of a great encounter from the English Premier League on Saturday, April 12 at 1:55 p.m. GMT when Manchester United travel to take on Blackburn Rovers.

Orbit-ESPN Sports will then present a Super Sunday of live sports on April 13. The day starts off at 10:55 a.m. GMT with live and exclusive coverage of the first FA Cup semi-final between Chelsea and Wimbledon. The second semi-final between Middlesbrough and Chesterfield airs live at 1:55 p.m. GMT.

Orbit-ESPN Sports will offer bi-lingual commentary for all three games with English commentary on Channel 19 and 89 and Arabic on Channel 18 and 88.

The live soccer action continues at 5:00 p.m. GMT with 90 Minutes. Orbit-ESPN's coverage of a top game from the Spanish Liga.

Golf followers can settle down to live coverage of the final round of The Masters tournament at 8:00 p.m. GMT. Played at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia, the Masters is one of the most famous tournaments in the world.

It is not an easy course and the record round of 63 was established by Nick Price in 1986. Entry is by invite only and the exclusive club includes Greg Norman, Fred Couples and Jack Nicklaus among others. The year 1996 saw Nick Faldo win the coveted green jacket.

Sports fans can then end the day with all the news

and action from America in Sport Centre live at 11:00 p.m. GMT followed by Baseball Tonight at 11:30 p.m. GMT with live coverage of the Houston Astros at the St. Louis Cardinals.

# Cavaliers beat Knicks to tie for playoffs

NEW YORK (R) — Terrell Brandon had 25 points and 11 assists and the Cleveland Cavaliers moved back into a tie for the final playoff berth in the Eastern Conference with a 93-73 victory over the New York Knicks on Tuesday.

Danny Ferry and Chris Mills added 21 points apiece for the Cavaliers (39-37), who pulled into a tie with the Washington Bullets, who lost to Toronto.

"I didn't know until the game was over that Washington had lost," said Mills, who added 12 rebounds. "This team has a lot of courage and heart. They could have taken us lightly tonight. They've beaten us three times."

Patrick Ewing scored 17 points and Allan Houston added 14 for the Knicks, who fell five games behind first-place Miami in the Atlantic Division with six games remaining.

At New Jersey, Alonzo Mourning scored 13 of his season-high 35 points in the fourth quarter as the Miami Heat overcame a 20-point second-quarter deficit to post a 94-92 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Tim Hardaway added 26 points and Voshon Lenard had 15 for Miami, which has won five straight games.

With the win and a loss by New York to Cleveland tonight, Miami opened a five-game lead over the Knicks for first place in the Atlantic Division with just six games left.

In Dallas, Sasha Danilovic scored a season-high 22 points and made 3-of-4 three-pointers in the fourth quarter as the Dallas Mavericks stopped their season-high 11-game losing streak with an 87-82 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Shawn Bradley had 17 points, five rebounds and four blocked shots and A.C. Green added 13 points and 14 rebounds for the Mavericks.

At the Warriors, Eddie Jones scored 11 of his 17 points in the first quarter and Kobe Bryant scored a season-high 24 points off the bench as the Los Angeles Lakers grabbed an early lead and held on for a 109-85 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Jones eight points in a 10-0 run that gave the Lakers a 28-15 lead with 1:38 left in the first quarter. Los Angeles took a 30-19 advantage into the second quarter and led, 65-35, at halftime.

In Los Angeles, Charles Barkley scored six of his 35

points in a key fourth-quarter run as the Houston Rockets upended the Los Angeles Clippers, 127-117.

Mario Elie and Clyde Drexler added 18 points each for the Rockets, who have won three straight and seven of their last eight.

Malik Sealy scored 26 points and Loy Vaught added 18 for the Clippers. Los Angeles had its lead over the Sacramento Kings for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference shrink to three games.

"Charles sure looks like he's back to me," said Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich. "He made the big plays when he had to, he's tremendous."

In Milwaukee, Penny Hardaway scored 21 of his 30 points in the second half as the Orlando Magic ended a slump by roaring to a 97-82 victory over the reeling Milwaukee Bucks.

Hardaway added 10 assists and scored seven points in a 22-3 burst across the third and fourth quarters for Orlando, which had lost five of its last six games. Dennis Scott scored 17 points for the Magic.

Glenn Robinson scored 22 points and Vin Baker added 19 and 17 rebounds for the Bucks.

In Phoenix, Wesley Person scored 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter and hit seven three-pointers as the surging Phoenix Suns became the first team in NBA history to have double-digit winning and losing streaks in the same season and clinched a playoff berth with a 115-107 victory over the Timberwolves.

Kevin Johnson had 23 points and Jason Kidd recorded his second triple-double of the season with 15 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds.

Phoenix has won 10 straight games and moved into a sixth-place tie with the Timberwolves in the Western Conference. The Suns started the season with 13 consecutive losses.

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 26 points and Corliss Williamson added a season-high 24 as the Sacramento Kings kept their playoff hopes alive with a 109-93 victory over the Vancouver Grizzlies.

The win pulled Sacramento within three games of the Los Angeles Clippers for the final playoff berth in the Western Conference. The Kings have six games remaining, including four at home.

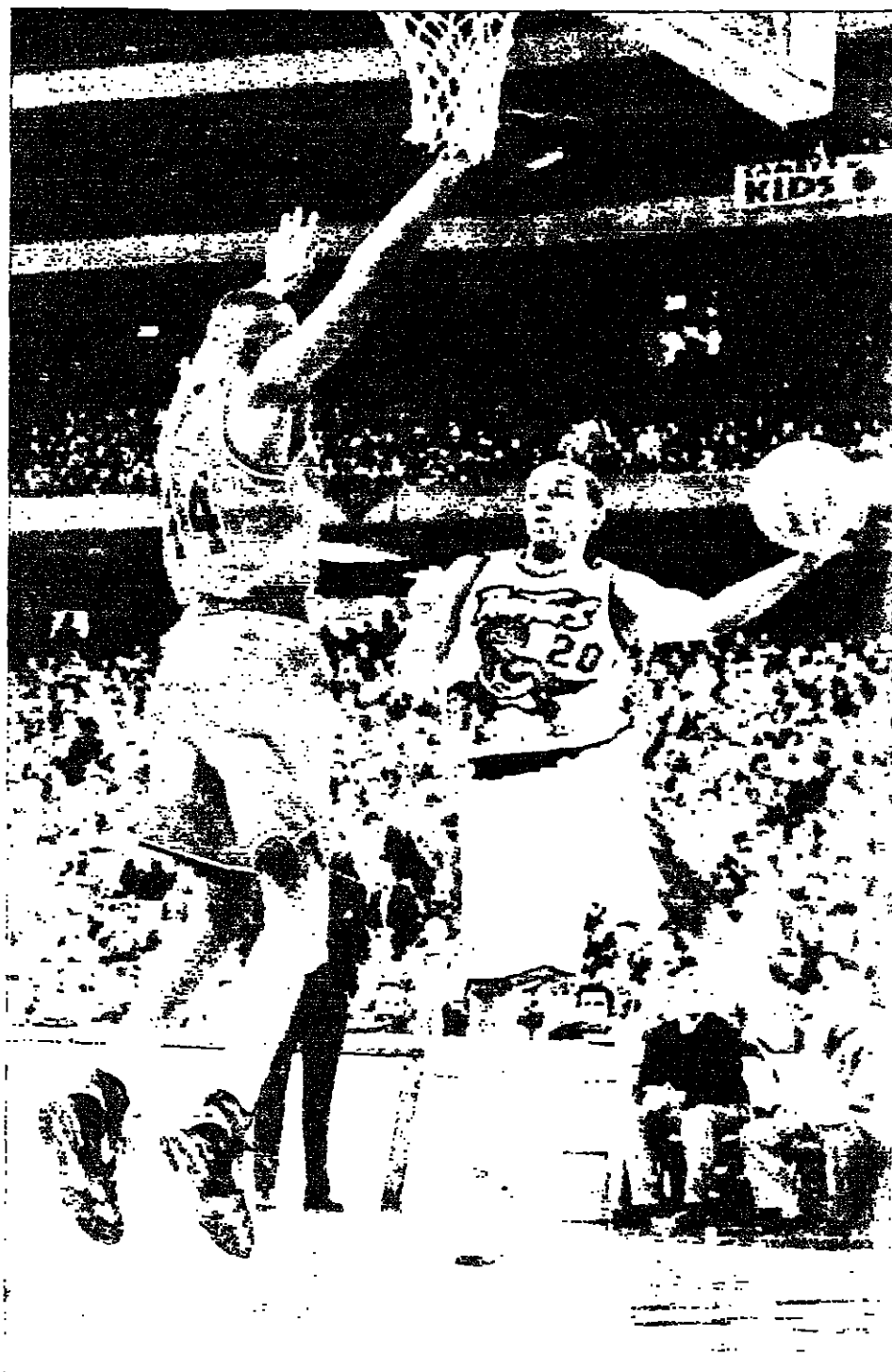
Michael Smith had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Brian Grant contributed 19 points for Sacramento.

In San Antonio, Monty Williams scored 20 of his career-high 30 points in the second half and the San Antonio Spurs held the Denver Nuggets to nine third-quarter points in a 96-90 victory.

Cory Alexander added 15 points and Vernon Maxwell had 13 for San Antonio, which has won 10 of 12 games against Denver, including five in a row at home.

Antonio McDyess scored 17 points for the Nuggets.

In Toronto, Damon Stoudamire scored 29 points and triggered a 12-4 run at the end of the first half that broke open a close game as the Toronto



Toronto Raptors' guard Damon Stoudamire (R) goes around Washington Bullets' forward Harvey Grant during first half NBA action in Toronto. The Raptors beat the Bullets 100-94 (Reuters photo)

Raptors coasted to a 100-94 victory over the Washington Bullets.

Walt Williams added 24 points for the Raptors.

Calbert Cheaney and Chris Webber scored 21 points apiece for Washington, which lost for just the second time in its

last nine games. The Bullets fell into a tie with the Cleveland Cavaliers for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

### NBA RESULTS

Toronto	100	Washington	94
Miami	94	New Jersey	92
Cleveland	93	New York	73
Dallas	87	Portland	82
Orlando	97	Milwaukee	82
San Antonio	96	Denver	90
Phoenix	115	Minnesota	107
LA Lakers	109	Golden State	85
Houston	127	LA Clippers	117
Sacramento	109	Vancouver	93

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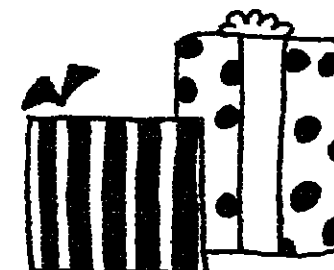


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## Israeli military wants free action against protesters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Senior Israeli army officers have demanded greater freedom to open fire on Palestinian protesters in the face of escalating violence in the West Bank. Israel Radio reported on Wednesday.

The radio quoted senior field commanders as saying the army's response to violent demonstrators needed to be "more effective and firmer," notably by targeting "organisers who incite the mobs."

But the radio said General Uzi Dayan, who commands troops in the West Bank, and the army attorney general rejected the demands.

The report came after the worst day in three weeks of violence left three Palestinians dead and around 100 wounded in Hebron on Tuesday.

The violence erupted after a Jewish settler shot and killed one Palestinian man. Two other Palestinians were killed by rubber bullets fired by Israeli troops who came under a five-hour barrage of stones and firebombs.

Standing rules of engagement in the Palestinian territories demand that soldiers "show great restraint" in responding to rioters and only open fire with live ammunition if their lives are in danger, the radio said.

Field officers are also under orders to let the Palestinian police take the lead in trying to contain demonstrators in areas under their control.

There have been almost daily street protests on the West Bank since Israel broke ground March 18 on a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Five Palestinians have been killed by soldiers in the clashes, but only one of these was shot with live ammunition, the others being killed when they were hit in the head by so-called rubber bullets — steel balls encased in plastic which are normally not lethal unless fired at very close range.

Settlers meanwhile called on the army to toughen its response to the protests, notably by using sharpshooters against those who lead violent demonstrations.



A masked Palestinian student pops his head through the roof of a paper Israeli bus to imitate an explosion during a Hamas rally on Wednesday, ahead of university student council elections (Reuters photo)

## Inter-faith conference concludes with differing stands on state and religion

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives from the Evangelical churches of Germany and members of Muslim communities and organisations on Wednesday disagreed on a unified definition of secularism and failed to work out a common framework for the relations between religion and state.

On the one hand, the Evangelical Church, founded in the 16th century by Martin Luther in opposition to the temporal powers of the Roman popes, has historically been an advocate of separation between the sphere of the state with all its worldly affairs and the religious and spiritual sphere of the church.

"Some aspects of secularism are vital to the very existence of our churches, funded at a time when religious institutions were too often and too deeply involved in political affairs, to the extent that the priests, busy with their temporal obligations, did not have time to follow the spiritual and religious affairs of the communities under their jurisdiction," said the Rev. Andreas Feldtkeller, professor of science of mission at Heidelberg University.

On the other hand, Islamic scholars maintained that it would be naturally impossible to find any affinity between secularism and Islam because Islam is a fully integrated code of life and the Holy Koran provides

a "divine policy for human beings" covering all aspects of life.

Rejecting the possibility that the Muslim World could ever experience a secularisation process similar to that in the West, Iraqi Professor at Al al Bait University, Faruk Samarra'i, recalled Sura 33, Verse 36: "It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by God and His Apostle, to have any opinion about their decision."

The three-day Christian-Muslim consultations on "Religion and Secularism" organised by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research — Al al Bait Foundation — ended on Wednesday with a summary of the ideas which were discussed rather than with a final deliberation. Farouk Jarrah, the rapporteur of the conference, admitted.

Mr. Jarrah told the closing session that though the "relation between secularism and religion occupies a great place in our contemporary life, scholars disagree on a unified definition of secularism" and stressed the need for "further discussions at different levels" on the relation between religion and secularism.

The second point of the final report read in English by the Rev. Heinz Klautke drew bitter criticism from some Muslim participants, who asked for its elimination. "If secularism is built on the achievement of experimental science and societal organisation, there is nothing

that contradicts religion. At the contrary, it coincides with religion." Similarly, participants objected on another point, which stated that: "In the secular Western society there are clearly separated areas of experience, life and activity: on the one hand the area of faith, religion and the church, and on the other hand the area of knowledge, culture and the state. Both areas are related to each other in a constructive and critical way."

One of the participants opined that this point "contains embellishments and praises to secularism, and it may be read as an invitation for Muslim societies to copy the Western experiences."

"We refuse it," another disgruntled scholar declared. Co-chairing the closing session with Bishop Rolf Koppe, President of Al al Bait Foundation, Nassereddin Assad pointed out that the point clearly refers to the experience of Western secular societies only and does not convey any biased message.

In addition, the conference identified some common basic problems which supporters of the secular state concept as well as supporters of the non-secular political order have to solve, including the participation of religious minorities in public life on the basis of equal rights and opportunities, the ability of people of different convictions to peacefully coexist and settle their conflicts in a pluralistic society,

and preventing the exploitation of religious feelings for selfish political interests.

Editor-in-chief of Arabic daily Al Dustour Nabil Sharif pointed out that this last point, referring to fundamentalism, must be clarified. "Does it apply to certain groups or does it set a general rule?" Dr. Sharif asked the conference.

The conference agreed that "as far as the main challenges of secular societies — pluralism, ethics, freedom, etc. — are common to Christians and Muslims, a cooperation in discussion and action is recommended."

"We have to work out our responsibilities as Christians and Muslims in a pluralistic world."

Stressing the necessity to create suitable conditions for the respect of human dignity, "so that human beings could make their free choices and realise their existence with all its material and spiritual dimensions." The participants gathered in Amman from 10 countries conceded that "secularisation was and still is a process of mutual transformation of both religion and society. This process is highly ambivalent and we cannot ignore it."

"Contemporary pluralism is a 'fair of truths', of mental orientations which determine the life of people. We all have to remember that on this 'fair of truths', only those will survive who have a truth to tell," the final declaration concluded.

## Arab League: Israel boycott to be revived

MANAMA (Agencies) — The Arab League plans to revive its economic boycott of Israel to force the Jewish state to change its policies. Esmat Abdul Meguid, the secretary-general of the pan-Arab body, said here Wednesday. "The league will try to revive the Arab boycott of Israel because that's the only language the Jewish state understands and the only way to make it change its attitude and allow the peace process to go forward," he said.

Mr. Abdul Meguid, speaking at a seminar in the Bahrain capital, also said Palestinian protests in the occupied territories would eventually force Israel to modify its policies.

The Palestinian territories have been rocked by daily clashes between Israeli troops and demonstrators since Israel began construction last month of a settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Mr. Abdul Meguid also said the league's decision last month to freeze normalisation of relations with Israel "was a shock for the Jewish state, which didn't expect such a move."

The Arab League imposed an economic boycott on Israel following its creation in 1948 but Jordan and Egypt have since established relations with the Jewish state and several other countries have begun a process of normalising ties. In Cairo, Arab countries said Wednesday that a Mediterranean security pact proposed by Europe is impossible until they are at peace with Israel.

Representatives of 10 Arab countries met in Cairo on Tuesday and Wednesday to study proposals for a Euro-Mediterranean conference to be held in Malta on April 15 and 16.

Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Libya argued that a French proposal for security cooperation between Middle East nations and Europe is a non-starter because of the state of war between most Arab states and Israel, an Arab League source said.

"Given the current imbalance in forces in favour of Israel and Europe, it is impossible to talk of expanding security cooperation," the source said.

The four countries believe it is "impossible to talk about military cooperation in the shadow of Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories."

"So as not to offend France — a friend and ally of the Arabs — the participants decided to set out their position in the form of observations and not objections," the source added.

The Arab countries are to hold another meeting at foreign minister level on the eve of the Malta conference to finalise their joint position on the proposed security pact as well as economic and social cooperation with Europe.

The Malta conference follows up on a forum held in Barcelona in November 1995 which called for a new Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

Sheikh Mohammad Sayed Tantawi, Egypt's top Sunni Muslim authority, said in remarks published Wednesday that suicide bombings were "permissible" against military but not civilian targets.

"Suicide operations ... are permissible so long as they are staged against enemies who are carrying out inhumane and terrorist policies," the cleric told a group of professors and students at the University of Cairo.

## SPLA offers prisoner swap with Khartoum

NAIROBI (Agencies) — Sudanese rebels offered on Wednesday to swap 300 captured government soldiers for five rebels seized by a force allied with Khartoum in southern Sudan late last year.

John Garang, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), said the exchange was necessary for humanitarian reasons and would go ahead with it when the government of Sudan accepted the deal.

An SPLA statement said Colonel Garang had asked the Norwegian government to coordinate with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the prisoner exchange.

He told Khartoum however that the 300 Sudanese prisoners of war to be exchanged would be selected from the earliest group captured by rebels since the civil war began in 1983 and would not include prisoners captured in offensives earlier this year.

The five SPLA rebels were captured as they were being flown back to home areas in the south late last year after receiving treatment at an icrc hospital in northwest Kenya for bullet wounds.

The plane, however, landed at an airstrip in the south held by a faction allied with Khartoum. The aircraft, its American pilot, Kenyan copilot and an Australian ICRC nurse were later released.

Forces under Col. Garang's command have stepped up their war this year to topple Khartoum's government through a rebel coalition called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Since 1983 the SPLA has fought for independence or greater autonomy for the Christian and Animist south from the Muslim and Arab north. The NDA says it aims to trigger a popular uprising in Khartoum.

In a separate development, Carl Tinstman, the coordinator of U.N. aid agency operations in southern Sudan, said the United Nations was trying to clarify Khartoum's position on aid work in areas of southern Sudan seized this year by the SPLA rebels.



Touch of poetry for late tax filers

MIAMI (R) — Several thousand last-minute income tax filers in seven U.S. cities are in line for a treat that may reflect their deepest thought at tax time — "April is the cruelest month." The Academy of American Poets will give out free copies of U.S. Eliot's poem "The Wasteland" to late filers who line up at post offices between 10 p.m. and midnight on April 15, the last day to file 1996 tax forms on time. "April is the Cruelest Month" is the poem's opening line. More than 3,000 paperbacks will be distributed in Miami, New York, San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, Boston and Washington D.C., the academy said.

Sextuplets heading for free college

NEW YORK (R) — The parents of sextuplets born last month in a New York City suburb had one less expense to worry about — college tuition — "on Tuesday after the state university of New York at Stony Brook offered free tuition to all six, who would graduate in the class of 2015. The offer, four years of school for six students, is worth \$81,600 today, university officials told a news conference. "Now I don't have to get that third or fourth job," joked the babies' father, Rocco Boniello, 30, a technician for the Nynex telephone company. Beverly Boniello, their mother, works as a mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service.

Plane survivors credit sorcerer for escape

BOGOTA (R) — The father of two young children found alive after a plane crash in a remote jungle-covered area of northwest Colombia said on Tuesday that a sorcerer was the key to their rescue. The children, aged five and three, were rescued by helicopter along with their grandmother on Monday, five days after the small commuter aircraft in which they were travelling disappeared in a guerrilla-infested area of Choco province. The children's mother died in the crash along with the plane's pilot and one other woman.

Thatcher-hater is arrested

LONDON (AFP) — An Egyptian lawyer who bombed former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with hate mail, was arrested as he tried to break down the door of her London office, the Daily Telegraph reported Tuesday. Mohammad Mahdi was taken away screaming in handcuffs after calling Thatcher a "psychopath" and a "slut," a court in London was told Monday, reported the paper. The court heard that Mahdi was obsessed with the idea that the former premier had placed him under surveillance for years. He made numerous visits to Thatcher's office and on March 12 threatened to break down the door when he was refused entry. He was convicted of using disorderly conduct and bound over to keep the peace for a year.

## Iran warns Bonn over Kurd trial but pledges to protect German interests

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran warned Wednesday of a threat to relations with Germany over the outcome of a trial of five men accused of the murder of Iranian Kurd opposition leaders in Berlin, but pledged to protect German lives and interests here regardless.

On Tuesday, the German Foreign Ministry advised its nationals against travelling to Iran because of anxiety over a possible negative verdict Thursday in the trial of one Iranian and four Lebanese accused of killing four Kurd leaders in a Berlin restaurant in 1992.

But Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati told a press conference here: "Any speculation on such threats is pure fantasy."

"In our foreign policy, we always take into account our interests and Islamic dignity and decency," he added. "They are suffering from illusions to think the whole world is going to crumble down because of this affair."

Around 500 German nationals, including diplomats, live in Iran. German prosecutors have linked Iranian political and

spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani with the 1992 assassinations.

A warrant has already been issued for Iranian Intelligence Minister Ali Fallahian, who is accused of ordering the killings.

The affair has deeply strained ties between Iran and its main trade partner Germany, and the prosecutors' charges provoked angry reactions in Iran, including massive protests in front of the German embassy last November.

Referring to the trial, Mr. Velayati said his country would "wait and see" the outcome of the "unfortunate situation."

Apparently forecasting problems with Bonn in the event Tehran is condemned by the court, he said Iran had "no need" of relations with a country "which makes it trample on its Islamic dignity and principles."

"Future relations depend on Germany. We want good relations based on mutual respect and equal rights. But a friendship cannot be one-sided, or it cannot last," he said.

But Mr. Velayati acknowledged that the German government is "independent" of its judiciary. "This we know.

What we have objections to is why the Berlin court has not preserved its independence and become politicised."

"How can they use some fugitive and criminals like Bani Sadr as a witness? A witness should be unbiased," he said, referring to exiled former Iranian President Abolhassan Bani Sadr.

"This is a malicious political act. The court is tainted with political considerations," he said.

Iran, meanwhile, is taking its own measures against Germany, planning to sue 24 German firms which allegedly supplied Iraq with chemical weapons technology during its 1980-1988 war with the Islamic republic and "certain" German officials who approved such exports.

The Iranian judiciary said Monday the defendants would be called to appear in a Tehran court shortly following complaints from more than 1,000 relatives of victims of chemical attacks during the war.

In an unexpected move, the Iranian parliament's foreign relations sub-committee discussed late Tuesday prospects for future relations with Bonn, but postponed any decision pending more information.

## Red Army suspects appeal against bid for stiff sentences

BEIRUT (AFP) — A lawyer for five suspected Japanese Red Army members charged in Lebanon with using false documents appealed Wednesday against a demand by prosecutors for stiff prison sentences, judicial sources said.

Bechara Abu Saad appealed to the cassation court against Tuesday's decision by the Beirut indictment chamber to recommend prison sentences of at least seven years for the five suspects, the sources said.

The cassation court's ruling on the appeal is irrevocable. The indictment chamber, the last judicial hurdle before the case comes to court, considered the crimes merited tough sentences even though an examining magistrate last week recommended jail terms of between three and seven years.

The suspects, arrested in February, were charged with falsifying documents and four lesser offences: use of false passports, illegal entry and residence in Lebanon and using false identities in preliminary interrogations.

"Interrogations hinted that the five suspects belonged to the Japanese Red Army and had used false documents for their safety and because they could not obtain Japanese passports," Mr. Abu Saad said.

The five suspects include 57-year-old Masao Adashi, described as the Middle East leader of the group which carried out a series of spectacular attacks in the 1970s.

The other suspects are Kazuo Tohira, 44, Haro Wako, 48, Mariko Yamamoto, 56, and 49-year-old Kozo Okamoto, the only survivor of the commando team which attacked Lod airport in Tel Aviv in 1972, killing 26 people.

Japanese Red Army members are regarded by many Arabs as heroes of the Palestinian struggle and the arrest of the five has been condemned by many organisations, including the Iranian-backed Hizbollah movement.

The Red Army worked with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine until 1978, when it announced it was halting its operations abroad against the Jewish state.